







“The huge beast passed them within what seemed to be less than a yard”

(See page 222)

ADVENTURES IN BEAVER STREAM CAMP

Lost in the Northern Wilds

BY
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*Illustrated with Photographs and Drawings by the
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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
WITH AFFECTION TO MY THREE KIDDIES,
E——, J—— AND B——,
WHO BY THEIR CRITICISMS AND SUGGES-
TIONS RENDERED ME VALUABLE
ASSISTANCE AND MADE MY
WORK A PLEASURE

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PART I

A FISHING TRIP TO NEWFOUNDLAND
WHICH RESULTED IN LEARNING
MANY THINGS THAT PROVED OF
GREAT VALUE LATER ON

ADVENTURES IN BEAVER STREAM CAMP

CHAPTER I

THEY PREPARE FOR A TRIP TO NEWFOUNDLAND

CHARLIE MASON was sitting in his room reading a letter from a friend who had gone into the Canadian woods for a fishing trip; with mixed feelings of pleasure and envy he was hearing of some extra large trout that had been caught, when the door was thrown open and in rushed Jack Sylvester wildly excited.

"We are going to Newfoundland, Charlie," he fairly shouted. "Going with Dad in less than two weeks, for salmon and the biggest trout you ever heard of; Mother and Evelyn are going, too, and Mr. Pratt; isn't it fine?"

"Are you fooling, or is it really true?" said Charlie, with suppressed excitement.

"Yes, honour bright. Dad just told me that he had long been thinking of it, but was afraid to say anything for fear that he would not be able

to get away, for you know how frightfully busy he has been lately; but fortunately things have been settled now and he will be able to get away next week, so unless something unexpected happens we shall be able to stay away for six weeks. Won't it be great?"

So it was really coming, the long-talked-of and much-longed-for trip to the real wild rivers of Newfoundland where one could fish for salmon, and camp on the banks of the pools free from all interference and out of sight of everyone. For two years this plan had been hanging fire; it had been the subject of endless talks during the long winter evenings as they sat in the big living room before the lights were lit, watching the glowing hickory logs. They had heard and read so much about Newfoundland. Mr. Pratt, who was Jack's father's greatest friend, had been there and his descriptions had seemed like tales of a veritable happy hunting ground. There were stories of great salmon and raging rivers with trout so big and numerous that one could catch as many as one wanted, and accounts of immense herds of beautiful caribou that trekked across the Island twice every year, of ptarmigan that ran under one's feet, of great arctic hares, of beaver colonies, and these stories had fascinated the boys and filled them and their father with a longing to taste such joys.

Only last year they had practically decided to go when Mrs. Sylvester had been taken ill and Mr. Sylvester found it impossible to get away, and so they had gone with an aunt and uncle to a quiet place in the Adirondacks and had enjoyed some inferior trout fishing in the company of some very inferior and much-spoilt guides. However, it had been better than nothing and certainly far better than going to the seashore with the crowds of other white-flannelled boys and over-dressed girls. At least they had been able to wear moccasins and go through beautiful wild forests and see occasional deer and other wild creatures. They had enjoyed it all, but felt that it left much to be desired. Now their hopes were to be realized and Charlie, in exuberance of spirits, promptly jumped up and knocked Jack head over heels, capsized a couple of chairs and a table, thereby smashing a large flower vase much to his disgust, for at that moment footsteps were heard coming upstairs and, before they could barricade the door, Mrs. Sylvester entered.

Her cheerful smile changed to a look almost of anger, but before she could say a word, Charlie had his arms round her neck and was begging forgiveness. He had been so happy that he had not known what he was doing, and she did the only thing to be done under the circumstances, forgave

him with a slight and very feeble attempt at a scolding.

"We are really going to Newfoundland, aren't we, Aunt Mary?" he asked, and she, as glad and happy as the boys themselves, said that the good news was quite true, and that they would all start in ten or twelve days.

"Now, boys," she added, "I am going out with Evelyn to order some clothes; do you want to come or would you prefer to make out your list of what will be necessary? Then this evening we shall be able to go over it with Dad and see just what will be needed. Here are some catalogues for you to look over."

The boys decided to stay at home and make their lists, so Mrs. Sylvester and Evelyn went together. During the whole afternoon the boys read alluring descriptions of all sorts of impossible camp outfits and of wonderful rods and tackle boxes, and their lists grew to alarming proportions. Nearly every fly seemed absolutely necessary, both for salmon and trout, and when it was time for Mr. Sylvester to return they had covered many sheets of paper with the names and prices of things they needed.

Shortly after five o'clock Jack heard his father come in and they both rushed downstairs to find out whether anything new had happened and

whether they really were going. Mr. Sylvester greeted the boys in his usual hearty way; evidently the prospect was just as pleasant to him as to the younger members of the family.

"It's all settled, boys, and Mr. Pratt will be here in a few minutes, and so will your mother and Evelyn, and we will go over the list of what is necessary to take."

"We have made out our list," cried Jack.

"Oh, yes, indeed, I can well see it, and I think we shall have enough paper to re-paper the dining room if we use those same lists, though we should have to do it ourselves if we bought all those things. Great Cæsar! How much do you think I intend to spend on you young rascals, and how many boats do you calculate will be necessary to carry all that outfit? Any one would think we were going on a five-year trip instead of five or six weeks. No, no; we must start all over again, so come along into the living room. Ah, yes, here come the others, now we can all get to work."

Mrs. Sylvester, Evelyn, and Mr. Pratt all came in and the whole party, as jolly as a lot of school-boys getting ready to leave school, settled themselves in the living room with paper and pencils and numerous catalogues of fishing material, camp outfits, etc.

While they are looking over the profusely illustrated pages, let us see who they are.

Mr. Sylvester was an Englishman who had come over to America fifteen years previously and had married soon after arriving, having met his wife on the steamer coming over. He was the head of a big banking concern, a man who for years had worked hard and who took his annual holiday of a month or so with his family in some fishing country. He was a big, jolly fellow, always full of fun, who preferred fishing to any sport on earth. His wife had exactly the same tastes and loved to get away from the exactions of social life. For her the wild woods and streams spelt complete happiness and contentment, to be alone with her family on a fishing trip was all that she asked for. No amount of roughing it daunted her or ruffled her happy disposition. Their only son Jack, aged thirteen, was a good type of healthy boy, fair haired, with bright blue eyes, a full-lipped mouth that was always smiling in a jolly sort of way, and showed a lighter side of his character, which, contradicted to some extent by the squareness of his jaw, showed a remarkable degree of firmness and determination. His well-shaped face was somewhat disfigured by the presence of a scar on his nose which was the result of an accident when he was eight years old. For his age he was somewhat

short, but of sturdy build. He was passionately fond of outdoor sports, especially shooting, and always keen to do whatever was proposed. His sister Evelyn, who was nearly two years younger, joined with the boys in all their outdoor amusements, but her disposition was entirely different from her brother's. She was very quiet, even reserved, and her whole idea was to help everyone, never showing the slightest evidence of selfishness.

Charlie Mason was the son of two of the Sylvesters' greatest friends. His mother had died while the boy was very young so that he scarcely remembered her. A few years later the father had been killed in a railway accident. Charlie, who was now fourteen years old, was taken into the Sylvesters' home and treated exactly as if he had been their own child, and though in no way related he always called them aunt and uncle, and was more devoted to them than most children are to their parents. For his age he was fairly tall and well built, a handsome boy with clear-cut features, rich brown hair, and deep-set dark blue eyes which had a delightfully merry twinkle that was characteristic of his sunny nature. His mouth was firm and very sensitive and had a curious habit of changing very suddenly from the happiest of smiles to an almost mournful seriousness. Above the brow the forehead

was well developed, which showed him to be possessed of acute power of observation. By nature the boy was extremely affectionate, very thoughtful of others and somewhat shy. Nothing interested him in the way of sport so much as fishing, while his moderate fondness for shooting was coupled always with a dislike for the actual killing of any warm-blooded creature, unusual in so healthy a boy in whom the savage instinct is apt to be very strong. Charlie's love for natural history, especially the study of bird life, accounted for the distaste for killing, as it is impossible to come into intimate contact with either animals or birds without developing an affectionate understanding toward them, and this is almost bound to overcome the thirst for blood. It always seemed to him a pity to kill anything unless it was required for food. His love of natural history was so great that he collected every book he could on the subject and his room was literally papered with pictures of birds and animals.

Fred Pratt was a very close friend of the Sylvesters and, like them, he was extremely fond of all outdoor sports in the wilds. He had travelled a great deal and had been able to gratify his tastes by hunting in Africa and India, and in most parts of North America. Of late years he had devoted most of his leisure time to fishing for, as he said,

he had killed more than his share of game and anyhow he preferred fishing. His wife, who was very delicate, never went with him on any of his trips. Therefore none of his three children, Bessie, Dorothy, and Fred, was able to go.

So much for the party now assembled in the cozy living room.

Mr. Sylvester handed the boys' list to Mr. Pratt with a twinkle in his eye. "Well, Fred, how's that for a *beginning*?"

"A beginning! Well, I should smile! They seem to think we are going to start a full-size store instead of going on a modest little five-weeks' trip. Let me see: salmon flies, twenty-two patterns, four sizes of each and two dozen of each size; that's 2,112 flies, which at an average price of about forty cents will amount to jolly near nine hundred dollars. If I am not mistaken you expect to use somewhere about a dozen and a half flies per day for each of us; for I suppose this list is for the whole party?"

Then he laughed heartily and added: "No, boys, you remind me of a friend who went with me to Africa for a three-months' shoot. He wanted to take ten thousand rifle cartridges with him and was somewhat surprised when I pointed out that he could scarcely expect to fire a hundred and eleven shots per day during

the three months we counted on being out. The first time I went off for salmon I was young and money was scarce. Each fly represented what to me was a lot of money, so serious thought was given to each. Finally two dozen flies made up my list and though I was away for one month I found I had seven left on my return. So you see we must start with the axe and chop your list down near the stump. First of all, only a few patterns of flies are necessary." And he made out a very moderate list of all that would be required of both salmon and trout flies. The fishing tackle was soon disposed of, including grilse rods for the youngsters and salmon rods for the adults as well as a few trout rods. All items were practical and no unnecessary money spent. Sleeping bags they all had, with good, stout, waterproof canvas ground sheets, for the nights in Newfoundland would probably be cold and the ground is apt to be damp. A couple of sets of aluminium cooking outfits were necessary in case the party separated. In the way of tents they were provided with two very light ones that would do for the grown-ups. So they only had to order two very small ones of special light cotton for the youngsters. Mrs. Sylvester suggested the waterproof silk tents, but gave up the idea when told how dangerous they were in case of fire.

For clothing, any old suitable stuff would do. Plenty of socks, wading boots, and high water-proof moccasins.

By the time dinner was ready the list of outfit was completed, and though the boys were greatly disappointed at seeing all their pet discoveries in the way of patent this and patent that thrown out as useless, they could not help admiring Mr. Pratt's business-like simplicity of outfit. As he said:

"It is just as well to make three piles: one of absolute necessities, one of things that you think ought to go, and one of what *might* be needed. Take number one and carefully lock up the other two piles and lose the key. Even then you will find that you have twice as much as will be really needed."

After dinner the question of food was discussed, and soon settled. Most of it they could get in Newfoundland, by sending the order ahead and having it packed and ready to be put on board the steamer which would take them from Bay of Islands northward. Special luxuries could be easily taken with them. Each boy begged to be allowed to take his own axe and suggested taking harpoons so that they could go after seals. But they were told that sealing was permissible only in the cold weather of winter or very early spring.

Evelyn and the boys were sent off to bed as soon as the lists had been completed, while the older members wrote for their guides and sent off the order for food supplies. It was decided that next day they should all go together to buy the outfit, for that would be part of the fun. So Mr. Pratt left them with the promise of calling again soon after breakfast the following morning.

In the meantime, the boys were in bed talking over the prospects, planning the catching of giant salmon, and enjoying what is only too often the best part of a trip, the anticipation. In one's plans nothing goes wrong, the weather is always perfect, the blackflies don't bite because you anoint yourselves with an unfailing preventive; the fish do bite because you have just the right flies as bait; in fact, everything goes well.

Gradually the boys' voices grew drowsy and soon ceased altogether as they drifted off into the happy land of dreams.

The hot summer sun was streaming through their windows when they awoke to renew the conversation of the previous night. New ideas came to them with the day, and they were chattering away like a pair of magpies when Jack's father came into the room and told them that they were all going out together at nine o'clock to buy the outfit.

Evelyn, standing behind her father, called out: "You lazy fellows, come along, it's nearly breakfast time. Get up and hurry or you will be late."

No further urging was needed. The two were soon up and dressed and ready for breakfast, but they were too excited to bother with eating. Long before nine they were ready and waiting and it seemed as though Mr. Pratt would never come. However, he finally arrived to be greeted by the youngsters with an overwhelming number of questions.

"Come along now, and let's buy the things, including your million or two of flies," he said, as he shoved them all out of the front door. "Never mind the talking, we shall have plenty of time for that in the train after we start northward."

The day's shopping was a huge success. The boys insisted on carrying innumerable packages so that they would not have to wait to see the contents after their return home. Tired, but supremely happy, they got back about five o'clock and forthwith the parcels were torn open and the brilliant array of flies were spread out to be admired. The rods had to be assembled and tested as to balance and weight, and each one had to be carefully marked with its owner's name. Lines were wound on the reels; in fact, everything that

could be done was done as though they were expecting to start the following day.

About dinner time a large bundle arrived containing the tents and cooking outfit, and it was all Mrs. Sylvester could do to prevent the boys putting up the tents in the room. As it was raining hard they had to wait until the next day before they could have the satisfaction of trying them. But almost as soon as the sun was up, Evelyn and the boys were out in the garden busy pitching the small tents; they even had carried out the sleeping bags to make sure that they would fit properly. Evelyn's tent was only six feet long and four feet wide, and unless the flap was up she could not quite stand up in it. But when closed it was delightfully cozy and thoroughly appealed to her idea of comfort.

"Let's ask Dad if we may sleep out here to-night?" she cried to the boys.

"Oh, yes, that would be fun," said Jack.

At that moment they caught sight of Mrs. Sylvester looking out of the window and immediately they asked if they might be allowed to sleep in their tents.

"Of course you may," she said. "Only be sure you put them up securely so that in case of a thunder-storm they won't blow down."

"Don't you worry, Mother, we'll see to that,

we can easily get some decent poles from the gardener."

And forthwith all three marched off to where the old gardener was working. Charlie was spokesman, for he and old James were great pals.

"James," he said, "we want some poles for our tents. Six will do and they must be about six feet long. Can you help us?"

"I'll find you some if you loikes, but you must promise to give 'em back to me when you're through, for I needs 'em bad."

Of course the promise was given immediately and the old man took them over to a shed and soon fitted them out with all they needed, and they returned joyfully to start putting up the tents securely. Just then breakfast was announced, and not very willingly they bolted indoors. After the meal was finished Mr. Sylvester went out and showed the boys where they could pitch their tents, and he left them very happily engaged in making a miniature camp in the little birch grove near the house. They were even allowed to build a fire and cook their own lunch. Potatoes, bacon, and slapjacks were decided on as forming a most appropriate meal. At Mrs. Sylvester's suggestion, the batter for the slapjacks was mixed by the cook, which, all things considered, was just as

well. Of course the fire did far more smoking than burning, amateurs' fires always do, but in spite of inflamed eyes and smutty faces and food, the meal was voted a great success. It was just as well that they were not in any very great hurry, for the frying of the slapjacks was a lengthy operation. The grease in the pan would insist on catching fire, so that, when they put the batter in, it stuck hard and fast and had to be chipped off in small black scraps. At last, however, the fire burned down so that there was less flame; they managed to make some fairly respectable examples of camp pancakes, though no two were of either the same size, thickness, or colour. Notwithstanding the various defects they tasted good, and as Evelyn remarked, "It's to be eaten they're made, and not for ornaments."

The days that followed seemed woefully long, the only excitement being the receipt of a letter from Andrew Strong the guide, saying he would have everything ready on the proper day and that he had arranged for Steve Trudel to go as second guide, while for cook and helpers he had Billy Talbot and Jim Stroud and John Cob.

According to the plans, Mr. Sylvester and the party would leave home on August 1st and go by train to North Sydney, where they would embark on the steamer for Port-aux-basques, and thence

by train to Bay-of-Islands where the guides and food supplies would meet them. From there they would go by steamer to the river they expected to fish. If the weather should prove fine, they could leave the steamer directly opposite the mouth of the river, but should it be too rough they would have to go to the nearest harbour and land there to wait an opportunity to go along the coast to the river in the dory and canoes.

CHAPTER II

THEY REACH NEWFOUNDLAND, MAKE CAMP, AND GET SOME FISHING

AT LAST the days of waiting came to an end. July 31st had really arrived. Everything was securely packed ready for an early start in the morning. During the whole period of waiting the boys had been fearing that something might happen to break up the trip, and they went to bed with the feeling that now at last they were fairly safe to go.

The night was hot and sultry and sleep was almost impossible, so they lay and talked and made plans for all the things they intended to do until finally a cool breeze came and soothed them to sleep.

By seven the next morning the Sylvesters and Charlie Mason were off for the train, intensely happy now that the departure was an accomplished fact. At the station they found Mr. Pratt awaiting them and the whole party was soon being carried northward in a comfortable Pullman car. The journey through Maine, New Brunswick, and

Cape Breton was made without anything of marked interest. Each stream and river was of course examined carefully, but they all appeared far too "civilized" as the boys said, "not real wild rivers such as we are going to."

The evening of the second day North Sydney was reached and soon the party was safely on board a trim little steamer which was alongside the pier waiting for the mail train, so that she could get off and across the dangerous Cabot Strait.

The boys, while standing about on deck, got into conversation with one of the officers, who told them terrible stories of the storms that raged during the long, dreary winter and how the little steamer had to plough through great fields of ice.

"How is it that the ice doesn't cut her?" said Charlie, for he had noticed that the bow of the steamer was sheathed with wood. "I always heard that ice would cut like glass, or break in the iron plates."

"Well, you see that coating of wood is of the very hardest oak and is laid over the plates; it has to be renewed as it gets worn through. But it ain't the ice that gives us most trouble, though goodness only knows it's bad enough at times, it's the fog we dread. It's so thick sometimes you can't actually see to light your pipe,

and the harbour over t'other side yonder is so small and the entrance as crooked as a rabbit track in the snow, that it's no fun trying to get in when you can't see nothing. Then the waves breaking on the rocks and hammering the ice against the shore makes so much noise that you can't hear the lighthouse foghorn. Between all that and the mill-race of a tide and the howling gales, 'tain't just exactly what you'd call pleasure trippin' after the weather once breaks."

"Are we in for bad weather to-night?" asked Jack.

"No, I don't think as we are, but there's likely to be a bit of fog, so don't let the sound of the old horn disturb your sleep, and don't bother to get up before you're called in the morning, as we may be a bit late in getting in."

"Come on, boys, it's long past bedtime and I expect you're tired."

"All right, Mother, we're coming," Jack replied, and down below they went and were soon tucked away in the small berths fast asleep. Nor did the repeated droning of the foghorn disturb their slumbers. They awoke fairly early to find that the vessel was scarcely moving. At regular intervals the deep boom of the horn sounded.

"I guess that old chap was right, Jack, for there is evidently fog."

"So it seems," said Jack. "I do hope we won't be delayed too much. Let's go on deck and see what's up."

So the boys dressed quickly and scrambled up on deck. Fog there certainly was, so dense that it seemed as if the vessel were suspended in mid-air. Not even the water was visible, and they wondered how the Captain could possibly find his way. They shivered as they stood there, for the air was cold and damp and sent a chill through them. What a contrast to the heat they had left in Boston but two days previously! It was almost too great a change and they went below to get warm.

At eight o'clock the steward told them that they had better have some breakfast as there was no telling how soon they would be in. The advice was good and they acted on it. Scarcely had they finished when someone came below and said they could hear the foghorn on shore. This of course was the signal for everyone to rush on deck, each one bent on getting the first sight of Newfoundland. But they could see nothing. Nothing but the shroud of mist which covered and hid everything from view. In the distance the roar of the breakers on shore could be heard and the vessel went ahead at snail's pace. The Captain was steering by sound as he crept slowly and so carefully toward the rock-bound coast.

Suddenly a slight breeze came along, gently sweeping the fog away as it passed over the water. As the mist moved, a thin, yellowish sun appeared, and as though this was the signal for raising the curtain, the fog lifted and but a few hundred yards away the moss-covered rocks of Newfoundland were clearly visible.

Here it was at last. A bleak but strangely fascinating place, wild and forlorn, but full of possibilities for those who like Nature in her own primeval state.

Twisting and turning about, the steamer worked its way through the narrow channel and soon was alongside the cold, gray wooden landing, near which was the narrow-gauge railway with its miniature engine snorting and puffing as though impatient at the delay. The landing was quickly accomplished, customs forms filled, and deposits made on the outfit, and within half an hour or so they were off. It was the first time the boys had been in a narrow-gauge carriage and it struck them as very funny.

"More comfortable for thin than for fat people," as Evelyn said.

The first part of the journey was over the open moors or barrens as they are called, richly covered with many and beautifully coloured mosses, then along the coast quite close to the sea. On the

inland side great mountains rose and lost their heads in the low-hanging clouds. Everywhere there were ponds, large and small, and in many of them were ducks playing about among the water lilies.

As they passed along close to the sea front, the boys noticed the peculiar growth of the spruce trees. Charlie asked Mr. Pratt about them and why it was that they started their branches level with the ground and gradually shelved upward away from the water.

“You see,” said Mr. Pratt, “during the winter the wind blows with such terrific force that the trees near the coast would all be blown down, or rather uprooted, as they have a very slight hold in the shallow, peaty ground, so Nature has arranged as cleverly as she usually does and made the trees throw their branches on the windward side along the ground, even under the soil, in order to get a better hold; then as the branches grow, the wind keeps them pruned very closely, thus making a compact mass so firm that it will bear a man’s weight quite easily. As the tree grows away from the sea its branches get longer while the top is kept solid and firm and slopes away. In this way there is the least possible resistance, so that the wind passes over it without doing any damage, whereas, should the wind succeed in

getting under the branches, the trees would be fairly lifted and uprooted."

"What a curious thing," said Charlie. "I noticed that on the windward side of the clumps of woods that we passed there is always a sort of shield of these sloping spruces. I suppose that protects the woods, doesn't it?"

"Of course. And you will notice that when the woods are in sheltered situations they do not have those protecting shields, for they are not needed. If only you take the trouble to look for it, you will find a reason for nearly everything in Nature. The trouble is, people will not take the trouble to use their eyes; or rather, they will not connect their eyes with their brain. Often, too, they simply look and see nothing. I can tell you that it pays well to observe everything as carefully as possible, for you never know when you will need your knowledge. So take my advice and keep your eyes open and don't be too proud to ask questions."

How little he realized when he gave this sound advice to what extent the boys would require the knowledge that they were to gather on this trip.

Fortunately both Jack and Charlie were naturally observant and took genuine pleasure in learning all they could about the lives and habits of the wild creatures. They were brought up with the idea that in nature everything has a reason which

can usually be discovered if only one takes the trouble to carefully and thoroughly observe.

In the course of the slow-winding railway journey the train crossed many rivers. In nearly all of them Mr. Pratt had fished and was able to tell them of his experiences with different fish that he had caught or lost.

"Why don't we stop here and fish these rivers," asked the boys, "and so save the long steamer trip?"

"Simply because nearly everyone who comes to Newfoundland has that same idea and the result is that the rivers are overcrowded and you have literally to sit on the pools to hold them, for if you go away for an hour some other chap will take them. Sometimes you meet fellows who have so little idea of manners or sportsman's etiquette that they will come to a pool where you are fishing and without the slightest hesitation or apology cast right across your line, especially when they see that you have had a rise."

"What do you do in a case like that, Mr. Pratt?" asked Jack.

"That's the question. One feels like committing a quiet little murder and burying the remains in the nearest bog-hole. I have tried a gentle remonstrance and received the reply: 'Well, I guess you don't own this river.' Such a creature

cannot be treated with decency. One time after receiving such a reply I had my guide cut some brush and let it float across the pool and kept on doing this till the fellow in desperation tried to cast between the branches and ended by losing two or three flies, while I sat quietly looking on and saying nothing. Once I put on a heavy fly and caught the line of a fellow, who thought it clever to fish across my pool, every time he cast near me. Quite by accident, of course! No, the best way to avoid such experiences is to avoid the frequented rivers, for the whole pleasure of fishing vanishes with any contact with disagreeable strangers."

"Isn't it funny," said Mrs. Sylvester, "how utterly selfish one is in fishing? I know sometimes when I have gone very early in the morning, which is the time I love best, to some particular stream to try for trout, and there at my pet pool I have seen a stranger fishing, why, my feeling was one of absolute hate, such as I have never had for any one else, and yet you can fish with a friend and thoroughly enjoy it. I cannot understand it all, Fred."

"It is indeed hard to reason it out. I remember once I was fishing in this river we are just passing. It's called Little River, because it's twice as big as most of them. I was down some distance

nearer the sea and had had several promising rises from a fair-sized fish. Unless a fish rises very soon after its first effort, it is generally best to let it rest before having another try. Well, I was just going to sit down and give it a rest, when, coming upstream about half a mile away, I saw a canoe in which were two men, and one had a salmon rod. They were paddling along, evidently making for my pool. How I loathed that man no one would believe. I wanted to see his canoe capsize or smash on a rock and if I could have had my wishes he would never have come much closer. Of course I could not let the fish rest, as I wanted that man to see that I held actual fishing possession of that pool, and so I kept on casting, but keeping my eye more on the approaching man than on the fly. Result was I missed the fish twice. There was something very familiar about the man in that canoe and to my surprise, I should say our surprise, it turned out to be my best friend. Neither of us knew that the other was in the country. Of course we were delighted and stayed together for more than a month."

"How about the fish?" said Jack.

"Oh, I forgot to say I caught him at the very first cast I made after my friend joined me."

"Was he big?"

"No, not very, only about fourteen pounds,

but he was a grand fighter, much better than some larger ones that I have caught."

It was well into the afternoon before the Sylvesters and party reached Bay-of-Islands, where their guides met them on the station platform. Andrew Strong had guided Mr. Pratt several times and the two met like old friends. Then there was a general introduction, first of Andrew to all the party, after which he presented the other four. Steve Trudel, Billy Talbot, Jim Stroud, and John Cob or Old John as he was called. Then all made for the baggage car and seized the various bundles and bags which bore the party's names.

"Am glad to see you got no trunks, Mr. Pratt," said Andrew. "These bags are surely a heap handier for the canoes. Why, do you know, the last sports I had brought two thunderin' big trunks, so big that it took pretty near two of us to carry each of them. I knowed well enough they wouldn't go in the canoes and told 'em so, but they insisted on trying, and after we had near busted the canoes they made us get a dory just so as they could fetch along them fancy trunks. That meant two more men and so we had to get that much more grub and waste all that time just for their foolishness."

Mr. Pratt and the Sylvesters, preceded by the men all heavily laden, marched down the steep hill

to the steamer which was to take them to their longed-for river. What accommodation the steamer had for passengers had been reserved for them. On deck they found the two canoes and the two dories in a convenient place for launching. The food supplies in small boxes were also on board so that everything was ready, and they all waited anxiously for the steamer to leave. It was, however, late that night before she cast off and proceeded down the magnificent bay formed by the mouth of the Humber River. Early in the morning they touched at the little settlement of Bonne Bay, perhaps the most beautiful bay in the Island; a short stay at the quaint little fishing village and once more they were off. Fortunately the weather was perfect and the Captain said he would let them off as soon as they were opposite their river. In the afternoon they arrived as near as the steamer could go and the boats were launched and loaded, and Jack, his father and Charlie Mason got into one of the canoes, while the others went in a dory. The other dory carried most of the kit and towed the extra canoe, and so all left the steamer and headed for the shore which held such great hopes for them. It was only about a mile and the distance was soon covered, the boys of course keeping well in the lead, for they could easily see the mouth of the river. Scarcely twenty

minutes had passed since leaving the steamer before the boats were in the current of the river. A landing was readily made, the boats unloaded and beached, and then all hands went up to look for a suitable camp site. The boys would far rather have got out the tackle and started fishing, but as it was getting late everyone was needed to help in getting the camp made before darkness set in.

Andrew advised pitching the tents out in the open, as the flies would not be so bad; the youngsters wanted it to be in the thick woods, but finally a compromise was made and the edge of the woods toward the shore and quite close to the river was chosen. Some ground was quickly cleared and tents laid out, poles and stakes cut, and within half an hour the four tents were pitched.

Then, while the men brought up the loads and made the fireplace, the others gathered bedding, and it was surprising how many armfuls of fir branches were necessary for the six beds. The boys, and in fact all the party, knew how to make "bough beds," so the work went on at a great pace. Very soon the deep, springy beds were finished, ready for the waterproof ground sheets and blankets. Then began the opening of the tackle cases. Rods were assembled and reels put on, lines threaded and leaders placed in soak. As Andrew brought in

the last load of provisions Evelyn suddenly realized that there were no tents up for the men.

"Where are you going to sleep?" she asked.

"Don't you worry, miss, you trust us to look after ourselves. It won't take us long to get our places ready."

"Haven't you got tents?"

"Yes, miss, we got one, but we'll make a bark lean-to, which is much better, and Old John is going out now to get the stuff for that. You just watch and you'll see how quickly we build our house."

About fifty yards away from the tents Old John deposited a big load of bark and began to make the lean-to. But just then Charlie came running in and said:

"Come on, Evelyn, Steve says the tide is on the turn and it's the best time for sea trout. Here's your trout rod and we've got the flies. Where's your little landing-net, you might need that."

"Here it is," and she pulled it out of her small tent.

Off they went, picking up Jack on the way, as he was finding out what were the best flies. They raced down to the beach shouting like a lot of young Indians. Each one selected what seemed a suitable place near where the river opened into the sea. Montreals and Parmachenes were the

flies they had been advised to use. No time was lost, as each one wanted to catch the first fish.

Scarcely half a dozen casts had been made before Evelyn had a rise, but in the excitement she missed. The next cast, however, was more fortunate and she hooked her fish.

"I've got one, I've got one!" she cried in her delight.

"So have I, and a whopper, too," came from Jack, followed a moment later by the same news from Charlie.

It was true. Each one had hooked a fish at almost the same moment, and lively fish they were, too. How the light rods did bend as the trout rushed first one way and then another.

"I say, isn't this sport, Evie, beats that old Adirondack fishing all to smithereens, doesn't it?"

"Oh, I can't speak," she replied, "he's pulling so hard. I do hope he won't get off. I'm sure it must be a salmon. Trout can't pull like this."

Charlie and Jack landed their fish, they were both under a pound in weight much to their surprise. Evelyn's fish had no intention of giving in yet, if anything he was getting more vigorous, and bent the tip of the rod into the water almost continuously. The boys, though much interested, had no time to watch her, and they were quickly casting again and getting rises at almost every

cast, but missing the fish through their over-eagerness. In the meantime, Evelyn was having the time of her life, and was at last rewarded by landing a splendid three-and-a-half pound sea trout entirely by herself.

"*Isn't* he a beauty?" came from all three at once.

And he was. His scales seemed to be of pure burnished silver and he was so finely built, quite different from those found in the inland streams and lakes.

At the end of an hour the good luck came to a sudden end. Not a rise could they get. Evidently the trout had moved off, so they laid out their catch which, all told, numbered thirty-two, varying in size from less than half a pound up to the three-and-a-half pounder caught by Evelyn. Such fishing they had never dreamed of, not even in their wildest hopes, and they returned to camp in a most triumphant state of mind. Needless to say they were well greeted when they showed the catch.

"By Jove, what a breakfast that will give us," Mr. Sylvester remarked.

"Why can't we have them to-night, Dad?" Evelyn asked.

"Because, my dear child, dinner—no, I mean grub, that's what it's called in camp—is just about ready. The fresh meat we brought from Bay-of-

Islands has been cooked, and we must make the most of it, for we shall get no more for some weeks. By the way, are those trout cleaned? No? Well, get a move on and clean 'em."

The youngsters in their anxiety to show their catch had forgotten the family rule that "he who catches must clean." So as the smell of dinner reached their nostrils and reminded them that they were very, very hungry, they lost no time in going down to the beach and preparing the fish for the pan.

Scarcely had they finished when, "Grub's ready" sounded loudly in the stillness of the evening.

"Dad's got a megaphone, I'll bet," said Jack. "And I'll bet it's made of birch bark," from Charlie. And he was right, for Mr. Sylvester, knowing the difficulty of getting the family together, had made an enormous bark horn which would cause the sound to carry a very long way.

Billy Talbot proved himself an extremely good cook. His steak broiled over the red-hot embers was a masterpiece. Potatoes, fried onions, and a finishing up of nice brown slapjacks made a meal fit for a king.

"Not much like our poor attempts," remarked

Evelyn, as she tucked away a beautifully browned one.

"We must take this opportunity of learning how to make them," suggested Charlie, smacking his lips.

"Yes, you had better make friends with Billy and he'll be able to show you lots of things in the way of camp cooking," said Mrs. Sylvester.

Mr. Pratt added: "You three will be so busy learning during the next few weeks that you won't have any time to fish. I say, George, what do you say to going out now before it gets dark and have a try for a salmon in the first pool, it's only a couple of hundred yards up the river."

"Right you are, I expect the leaders are well soaked by now. I'll be with you in a jiffy, only got to slip on my waders. We needn't take the men. If we should chance to get a fish the boys can run back and get them to bring the gaff, for I don't suppose they have been lashed to handles yet."

"Mine is ready," said Mr. Pratt, "so we can take that with us. Come on, boys. What about you, Mary, do you want to come?"

"Not yet, thank you. But Evelyn and I will follow soon. Just show us where you are going."

"You see that dark still water beyond the tall dead pine; well, we shall be there. Just follow this track through the corner of the woods and it

will bring you right to the pool. We'll be off now. Better bring some fly dope along, for the mosquitoes are apt to be troublesome."

The two men and the boys started off to the pool. As they were tossing up for choice of ends an enormous fish rolled lazily in the very middle of the pool.

"By Jove! that's a fish and a half; looks like one of those thirty-pounders people tell about but don't often catch in this country," said Mr. Pratt.

The boys were sure it was a porpoise, so big and dark did it appear. They were so excited that they could scarcely speak, for they fully expected to see the fish caught at the very first cast. They had much to learn about salmon fishing. Both the men worked hard, trying every sort of fly, but beyond getting one lazy reply their efforts were unrewarded. They had the pleasure of seeing other big fish several times, much to Mrs. Sylvester's delight. In the dim twilight they went back to camp. The big blazing fires gave an air of comfort and beauty to the scene and as Mrs. Sylvester remarked: "It almost makes one want to be a fire-worshipper."

Bed was very much the order and in a surprisingly short time there was no sound save the crackling of the fire as the sparks shot up through the tree-tops.

CHAPTER III

THEY TRY SALMON FISHING AND HAVE GOOD LUCK
THEY ALSO LEARN THINGS

BY FIVE o'clock next day the sound of the axe awoke the family, after a night's sleep such as one never gets except in the wilds. The pure sweet air, tinged with the aromatic scent of the balsam boughs, was so different from the air of inhabited regions. Even the smoke from the blazing birch fire was sweet. It was delightful to lie there on the fragrant beds and enjoy it all, but there was fishing to be done, to say nothing of a delicious breakfast of fresh fried trout to be eaten. The men and the boys washed down by the river-side in the clear but very cold water. Then came the breakfast, one never to be forgotten, and as soon as it was finished preparations for the day's sport were begun.

"I'll take the two boys with me if you like, George, and you go with your wife and Evelyn. I'd like to give them some lessons in salmon fishing, if you don't mind."

"All right, if you are sure they won't bother you."

So it was decided. They tossed for who should have the upper and who the lower part of the river. Mr. Pratt and the boys chose the upper. That meant a walk of a mile or two before they began fishing. Steve accompanied them, while Andrew went with the others. Under the skilful teaching of Mr. Pratt, the boys soon learned to cast fairly well, but the day was almost too fine and clear and the fish did not rise well.

The result of the whole day's work, however, was not bad for a beginning. Jack got a five-pound salmon, Charlie two grilse, Mr. Pratt one eight-pounder. Mrs. Sylvester got one small grilse, her husband one ten-pounder, while Evelyn hooked and lost a small salmon after having it on for half an hour.

It is scarcely necessary to say that everyone had enjoyed the day to its fullest. Jack could not get over the strength of his five-pounder. It had given him all he could do to bring it to the gaff, and he confessed that, much as he would like to catch a bigger one, he was just as glad that the first had been small. Poor little Evelyn was very sad at having lost her fish, but she had had some fun, and anyway, she said, it was better than not having hooked one at all.

"What can we do with all this fish?" asked Mrs. Sylvester. "Surely we cannot eat so much before it spoils."

"Don't you worry, ma'am," replied Andrew. "There's eleven of us here and all got pretty good appetites, so you won't find much left to-morrow."

"But suppose we get much more than we can use, what do we do with it? Up in Maine, when we fished for black bass, we let every one go except what we needed for food," said Jack.

"Well," said Andrew, "don't you let any salmon get away, please, for there will be days when we can't catch none. You know, they get sulky sometimes, or the weather may be bad or something may happen, and then we'll need all we get."

"But how in the world can we keep them? Surely they won't last more than two days, as we have no ice."

"Smoke 'em, sir, smoke 'em. You catch the fish, and we will show you how to do it. All we got to do is to make a bark smoke-house and we'll have the finest smoked salmon you ever saw."

Mrs. Sylvester became interested, for she had visions of using the results of their trip during the winter months, so she asked Andrew how long the smoked fish would keep.

"Well, that all depends, ma'am," he said slowly. "If they's slightly salted and smoked for four or five days and then packed properly, they'll keep for a couple of months if they're kept in a dry, cool place, away from flies. We fellers don't bother

much about smokin' 'em. We just puts 'em in salt, so they keeps forever."

"That's fine," said Jack. "We'll catch all you want, so that you can smoke some for us to take home, and salt some for yourselves."

Andrew smiled as he replied, "Thank you, I expect you'll catch all you *can*."

"How about sea trout; can't you smoke or salt them?" asked Charlie, thinking of their first afternoon's sport.

"No, they ain't much good, they get so very dry, for they ain't got the fat like the salmon has. Of course, they do well enough if you have nothing better, but they're not what you might call popular, except when they're quite fresh."

The following day, the party changed about, and Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester took the upper part of the river. Instead of taking a complete lunch, they simply took some soda biscuits (scones), tea, sugar, and salt. These were left, together with a kettle and some cups, at a certain pool about half way to the place where the fishing started at the upper pool. The plan was to meet there at lunch time and cook some salmon. This sounded like a real picnic.

The morning's fishing proved very discouraging until about 11.30, when things began to happen. Evelyn caught the first one, a fine lively

grilse, which spent most of his time in the air, much to her delight. Five other fish were caught before the two parties arrived at the meeting-place, Mr. Pratt having landed the largest one, which weighed fifteen pounds.

The Sylvesters reached the appointed place first, and, while waiting, Evelyn saw a grilse jump at the lower end of the pool. Of course, she immediately went after it, and just as the boys appeared on the scene, to her intense delight she hooked the fish. She felt very important playing the lively grilse with all the family watching, and even Jack's announcement that he had landed a seven-pounder did not in the least detract from the pleasure she had in showing off her skill. Charlie asked to be allowed to gaff the fish. She felt a little dubious about letting him do it, but finally consented. His first attempt was a failure, and he struck the line.

"Oh, don't be in such a hurry, Charlie," she cried. "Wait till I bring him nearer the surface."

This she proceeded to do, and the fish was securely gaffed. The men then gathered some dead driftwood and some birch bark, and had a small fire going in a few minutes. The kettle, which is the most important part of every Newfoundlander's outfit, was hung on the end of a green stick, whose other end was stuck in the ground. One of the

salmon was now cleaned and split, and, fastened in a split stick, was soon broiling over the fire, giving off a most delicious odour which promised well.

“I don’t believe that will be enough for all of us,” said Jack. “Let’s cook one of the grilse, too.”

So one was prepared and was soon sizzling over the fire. No fish had ever tasted so good to the family. The smell of the wood was in the fish and added greatly to the flavour. Altogether, the meal was most thoroughly enjoyed, none realizing how much the keenness of their appetites had to do with the excellence of the cooking.

Both Evelyn and the boys were tired with the morning’s casting, so they decided to return to camp and have a try for sea trout as soon as the tide was right. The result was some splendid sport, though nothing more than three pounds was caught. Toward evening, the weather changed and it began to rain, so they put up a large square shelter of birch bark for a dining room in order to be able to eat in comfort.

Next morning it blew a regular gale with almost incessant rain. Fishing under such circumstances was out of the question, so the boys got Steve to tell them something about his life in the wilds. He was a half-breed, his mother a Labrador Indian, his father a French fisherman. His English

was so quaint, that it will be better to translate it in order that it may be more easily understood.

"What do you do all winter?" asked Charlie, as they all sat under the bark shelter before the blazing fire.

"Sometimes I go off to the banks, fishing, and sometimes I trap. They are both pretty hard, but I like the trapping best, as one is more free to do what one wants, and I manage to get home to the wife and kids more often."

"What animals do you get?"

"Foxes, otter, musk-rat, ermine, and lynx; but the foxes are the chief skins, for there are a lot of 'silvers' here in this country and they are worth a pile of money."

"What is a 'silver'? Is it like the common fox, and how much is it worth?" asked Charlie.

"Well, 'silvers' are the same breed as the others, but they're sort of freaks. Good ones are black with just a tipping of white, and they are worth more than a thousand dollars. I have heard of one which sold for two thousand seven hundred dollars, but I don't believe the poor trapper got half that sum. It's those dealers who get the money, we poor chaps who do the work get left every time."

What are the common fox worth?"

"Oh, not more than five or ten dollars."

"How many foxes do you get in a winter?"

“Not many in this country; sometimes not more than five for the whole winter’s work, and sometimes twice as many, but out of that number there’s likely to be either silver or crosses. But some silvers are not worth more than fifty dollars. Over in Canada a fellow gets often a hundred foxes in a season, but then there is not one chance in a hundred of getting a silver. If a fellow got that number of skins over here, he would probably have fifteen or twenty ‘silvers,’ and would make enough to keep him going for the rest of his life.”

“It must be awfully exciting visiting the traps,” said Jack, who had always wanted to be a trapper.

“Yes, but it’s harder work than you would believe, and it’s mighty lonesome, unless you have a friend with you, and we usually go in pairs. But even so, it’s hard, cold work, for the winters are cruel up here, and the line of traps must be visited two or three times each week no matter how bad the weather is. Sometimes a blizzard comes along and catches you when you are out on the job, and you can’t get back till it passes. So you have to make a shelter if you are not within reach of a ‘cabin,’ and just keep a roaring fire going to keep you from freezing.”

“What sort of grub do you have, and how do you get it?” asked Jack.

“We take up barrels of flour and pork, some tea

and sugar and baking powder, and that's about all. If our camp is going to be near a river, we take our supplies up in a boat before the cold weather starts, but sometimes we have to drag it most of the way in sleds when the ground is covered with snow. We get a few rabbits (hares), and sometimes a caribou for a change, but we live very simply, I can tell you, not much like the sort of grub we get here in this camp."

"Are otters common?"

"No, with luck you get four or five during the season, and about the same number of Lucifer (lynx), though there are more of them now than there used to be. In fact, there used to be none at all before they came over on the ice from Labrador, and that's not so very many years ago. Their skins are worth from ten to fifteen dollars. About the same as otters, or a trifle less."

"How about musk-rats? Aren't they very common?"

"Yes, in some places, but not like in Canada. I can remember when they weren't worth catching, for they only fetched five or eight cents apiece. Now they have gone up to twenty-five and even fifty cents, so we try hard for them."

"You haven't mentioned beaver," said Charlie. "Yet I have read about them being in Newfoundland, I'm sure."

"They are here right enough, but the 'law's on 'em,' and we are not allowed to touch one for several years."

"How is that?"

"Well, you see, they used to go for them so hard that in a few years there would have been none left, so now the fellows in St. John's have made a long close season. It's pretty hard on us chaps, but I suppose it's our own fault. You see, the beaver is the easiest of all animals to trap or shoot, and as the skins were worth ten dollars, we very naturally got all we could. When we found a colony, we simply wiped it out. We had no sense, and now we are paying for it. If we had only done like the old Indians did, it would have been different. In parts of Canada, so I've heard, they found a colony of, say, twenty beavers, that's about four lodges or families, and they took only ten each year. So the colony kept right on breeding and were like any other crop. Some of those Indians knew just how many beaver they were going to get each season; but then if we had tried that here, some other chaps would have followed behind us and taken all we left, so we left *none*. Perhaps some day we may be allowed to go beaver trapping again, when they get really common."

"Can you show us a beaver colony near here?" asked Charlie who with his craze for natural his-

tory would have given anything for an opportunity to see and study these most interesting of animals.

"I expect so. How would you like to take a couple of days and go up into the country? We could go by canoe quite a long way, as there is a large lake above where you started fishing, and from there we could go up the river where it comes in. You'll see lots of things that will interest you."

"Let's ask Dad," said Jack, and forthwith they went over to the tent and put the suggestion.

"Rather a good idea," he said. "I don't suppose we shall need the tents. Andrew and Steve," he shouted, "come here! What do you think of this scheme of making a two-days' trip up country? We could manage in the two canoes, couldn't we?"

"Yes, sir," Andrew answered, "and this would be a good time after the rain, as the fishing won't be much good here until the water goes down a little. This rain will make it easier going up above, and we should have a spell of good weather when this storm passes. We can easily rig up a bark shelter, so we won't need anything but some grub, a couple of kettles, and the sleeping bags."

"How about fishing? Will there be any up there?" asked Charlie.

"Take your trout rods. They'll come in handy,

for you will find some pretty good fishing in the upper river. Well, sir, shall we start to-morrow, if the weather is good?"

"Yes, and we must get everything ready to-night. Tell Billy to make lots of biscuits."

"Right, sir, I'll see to it all"; and Steve and Andrew went over to Billy and gave him his instructions. Some bacon, tea, sugar, flour, butter, jam, and a couple of tins of meat were packed ready, some cups, a kettle, a cooking pail, frying-pan, and a couple of axes. Plates were not allowed, as the boys insisted that birch bark was much better and would not have to be washed. They also wanted to leave the frying-pan behind, but the word "slapjack" made them change their minds. Only half their regular allowance of blankets was to be taken for, as Andrew said, they would have big fires built in front of the lean-to and it would be quite warm.

The whole party was greatly excited at the prospect of the trip, and it was quite late before the boys could be induced to stop talking and go to sleep.

The morning broke bright and clear overhead, while a blue veil of mist covered the land. This gradually vanished, and by the time breakfast was finished everything was bathed in sunlight. Steve and Jim Stroud had carried the canoes up to

the lake, as the water was dangerously high in the river. Andrew and Old John took the rest of the outfit, and as soon as breakfast was finished, off they all started.

The trail up river was of the usual kind, just a moss-covered winding path through the low woods. Most of the trees they passed were spruces, and nearly all were well covered with moss. It struck the boys that it would be very difficult to tell north from south if they had to depend on the popular belief that moss only grew on the north side of the trunks, and they asked Andrew whether he had ever heard of this.

"It's fairly true in some places," he replied, in answer to the question, "but you can't really depend on it, in a thick wood especially. Trees that grow out more or less solitary-like and get the full force of the wind as well as the sun are usually more heavily coated with moss on their north side. But you can't trust it altogether. You see, moss doesn't like the sun, so it doesn't grow so much on the south; and the tree doesn't like the cold wind and freezing rain on its bark, so the moss acts as a sort of protection."

"I always carry a compass," said Charlie, "and I expect that's the best thing to do, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's well to have a small one along with you, for it does help to make you walk straight if

you only believe that it's right; but the strange thing is, if you do happen to get lost, or rather if you do happen to lose camp, you never will believe the compass. It always seems wrong, and you insist as often as not in going in circles. No one knows why you do so, but it's a fact that ninety-nine out of a hundred people who aren't really accustomed to the woods keep going round and round, and the more nervous they get about being lost, the smaller the circles. I've known sports go round their camp a dozen times, passing within a couple of hundred yards of it and not until they heard voices or seen smoke would they find it.

"Now, if you'll only *use* the compass and believe it, you can at least go straight. But the safest thing is to be born with wood sense, that is, you always keep your eyes open and notice everything without knowing that you're doing it. It's sort of born in you, and you can *feel* the north and south. We fellows who live out in the wilds so much manages to find our way about without knowing how. Of course, there's some who never can find their way, and they ought not to go out alone. Why, do you know, a chap went out rabbit shooting near Howley last autumn and lost his way within half a mile of where he lived. It was pretty cold weather along in November, and that man, born and brought up in the neigh-

bourhood, went round and round in a small piece of spruce woods until he got exhausted and fell down, and no one heard anything more of him until three days later some deer hunters came across him stone dead, within shouting distance of his home. He just naturally got scared and lost his sense."

"But why didn't he fire a shot?" asked Charlie.

"Goodness only knows. His folks said they heard some shooting, but of course they thought he was hunting rabbits, and didn't worry, and when he didn't turn up they supposed he'd gone off to stay with a friend of his who lived a mile farther down the track. They never even felt worried about him till next day."

"Didn't he light a fire or do anything to help himself?"

"Not a thing. Just kept on going round and round, just like an animal that's shot in the head."

"What's the best thing to do if you get lost?" asked Charlie.

"Well, that depends. Sometimes it's best to light a smoke fire if there's not too much wind and you think there is any one within sight. Then fire a shot once in a while. But, after all, if you are really lost, keep on straight, keeping some distant mark in sight, till you find a stream. No matter how small it is, it will lead you to other

streams and they will take you to rivers, and rivers will surely take you somewhere. Of course, it makes bad walking, especially in this boggy country, but you can't be too particular when it's a case of life or death. It don't pay to do much shouting, because you can't be heard, and it's mighty exhausting; though perhaps you might make a birch horn, like your uncle has, and make yourself heard quite a distance. If you do shout, do it three or four times pretty close together. Once is no good, because a fellow might be leaning down or making more noise, and then if he thinks he hears something, he'll look up and listen for the next call; but he may not get the direction of the sound until he has heard it once or twice."

As he finished speaking, the boys caught sight of the lake in front and rushed forward with Evelyn, to find Jim and Steve with the canoes on the edge of quite a large lake.



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A Newfoundland caribou

CHAPTER IV

THEY GO FOR A TRIP INLAND—GET SOME GOOD TROUT
FISHING, SEE CARIBOU AND BEAVER,
AND LEARN SOME MORE THINGS

IT DID not take long to embark. Mr. Pratt and Mrs. Sylvester went in one canoe with Andrew and took most of the kit, while the three youngsters went in the other with Steve and Mr. Sylvester. It was a glorious morning for a paddle, not a ripple stirred the surface of the lake except when three loons swam ahead of the canoes diving occasionally, then coming up and giving their weird cry which echoed in a most curious way around the lake.

“Why, it sounds as though there were madmen all round the lake laughing at us,” said Evelyn.

Her description was an accurate one, for there is no sound in nature more weird and uncanny than the queer call of the loon.

For about a mile and a half the explorers kept on toward an opening which they finally made out to be the river.

“We’re lucky to have such a fine morning,” Steve remarked; “if there had been much wind,

we would have had to go round the shore and inside those islands and that's a much longer way."

As they approached the river mouth they saw something moving very rapidly along the water between one of the islands and the mainland.

"There's a canoe," both the boys cried together.

Steve smiled and said in his quaint way: "I no tink."

"Surely it is, isn't it, Dad?"

"Well, I don't know, it certainly looks like a canoe with no one in the stern, but a big person in the bow."

Just then Mr. Pratt called: "See the caribou over there, not a bad looking stag either."

Then, of course, there was great excitement and the canoes were driven through the water as fast as possible in hope of getting close to the animal, but he was a long way off and was moving almost as fast as the canoes.

"Now, boys, keep very still and we'll paddle quickly and quietly straight for him as he lands and perhaps we may get close," said Mr. Sylvester.

So the boys sat tight, scarcely daring to breathe, and rapidly the canoes moved forward toward the stag, which had landed. As he came out of the water he shook his coat, just as a dog might do, then stood like a statue and stared at the approaching boats. Several times he lowered his

head, then flung it up again as though trying to get the scent.

Closer and closer they came in the canoes, and still the stag did not go. Finally they were within fifteen yards, moving very slowly, when one of the canoes struck a snag with a loud noise. That broke the spell and the stag gave one frightened snort, a quick sideways jump, and then turned and crashed through the low bushes and into the dense trees where he was immediately lost to view.

"Oh, I say, wasn't that fun?" shouted Charlie. "What a pity we didn't have the camera ready, wouldn't he have made a fine picture."

"That's a jolly good beginning to our trip, I call it. Almost as good as catching a big salmon," said Jack, who in his heart would probably liked to have had a shot at the animal.

Charlie then asked Steve: "Why is it that caribou was gray with scarcely any white, and why were his horns so very thick?"

"That's his summer coat, the hair is short and gray but it will soon change, and he will have a snow-white neck and rump, and in winter he'll be almost all white."

"Oh, but I never knew that they changed their colour like these hares do, for they do, don't they? It's so that they cannot be seen in the snow, isn't it?"

"I don't know if that's the reason, but they certainly do change to white just as soon as the snow falls. But then their greatest enemy, the ermine, does just the same. You see he is sort of yellow brown all summer and then he gets white at the same time that the rabbit does. So I expect there is some other reason that no one knows, not even those fellows who write books about animals."

"That does sound strange," said Mr. Sylvester. "I had never thought about it from that point of view."

"You did not tell me about the caribou's horns, why they are so thick?" asked Charlie.

"They're still in the velvet, as they are not quite hard yet; you see they are new, only started to grow about May, to take the place of the ones he dropped last November. Now in a month or so the velvet will come off as the horn gets hard, the stag rubs it off against the trees, and you can find some very popular rubbing trees which are used by numbers of stags. Some of the velvet is picked off with their hind hoofs."

"Just think of growing such great big horns every year! They must grow awful quick," said Evelyn.

While they were talking, Jack suddenly spotted something moving in the grass near the shore.

"Hush," he said, "what's that?" Then a moment later a small brown creature entered the water and swam toward them. "Oh, it's only a musk-rat, I thought it was something much bigger."

The object of their attention stopped when he heard Jack's voice, took one look at the canoes, dived very suddenly, and was not seen again.

"Looked almost like a small beaver," said Jack.

"Oh, no, his tail is quite different," Steve replied; "the beaver's tail is very big and wide and lies flat on the water and they don't swim with it, but the musk-rat has a long tail which is like a narrow paddle and he uses it to swim with. Now we must get along or we will never get up to the camping place."

As they paddled along the shore there was suddenly a big swirl of water making quite a wave.

"That's a salmon, boys," called out Mr. Pratt, "this is evidently a spawning bed."

And then the boys were told how the salmon come up every year from the sea, entering different rivers at different times, but always at about the same time each year. After staying in the fresh water for a short time in the lower part of the river, they work their way up to certain sandy and gravelly places and there make their spawning beds or nests. When they enter the rivers, they are a

bright silver colour but this soon goes and they get a very dark and greenish bronze. After the spawning season is over they return to the sea which is their real home. In this way the Atlantic salmon differ from those in the Pacific, for there they go up the rivers and, after spawning, die, which is something no man can explain.

While Mr. Pratt was telling them this they were getting nearer the mouth of the river, when Charlie saw a curious piece of wood, about four feet long and two inches thick, both ends quite white and roughly pointed. On asking what it was, Steve got hold of it and explained that it was a beaver cutting. This was indeed good news, especially when he told them that they would probably find a colony somewhere up the river, for the cutting was quite fresh and had evidently been washed down by the recent rise in the river.

“What did they cut that for?” Charlie wanted to know. “Was it to build a dam with?”

“No, it is too early for building dams and houses, that will begin later, but this was for food”; and he showed them where the sharp teeth had cut off some of the bark. “A big beaver cut the stick, but a small one had started to eat the bark.”

“How in the world do you know that?” asked Charlie, much amazed.

“By the size of the teeth; at the ends, the teeth marks are wide, but there along the sides, the marks are quite narrow, about a three or four-months-old beaver.”

“Quite simple when you know how,” remarked Jack’s father.

When they reached the river their progress was very slow, as the current was strong. In several places there were rapids and the canoes had to be carried past, as they were too heavily-laden to get through without danger. The boys noticed that whenever it was possible the canoes were kept quite close to the banks, and Steve explained that there was usually a back eddy or return current which went up instead of down stream and so it helped them along.

“When we go down stream you will notice that we keep right in the middle, especially in the rapids, where you will be surprised to see that we pick out the roughest water, for that is the safest so long as you keep right in the middle of the waves at the point of the V where they come together,” added Mr. Pratt.

Shortly before noon they reached a place where the men said was the best camping ground as there was good trout fishing to be had at the mouth of a small stream close by which emptied into the river. And back of the fringe of trees

there was a big barren that should have lots of bake apples.

"What in the world are bake apples?" Evelyn asked.

"They are very sweet yellow berries that grow in the bogs," said Andrew. "And you will find them very good, either raw or cooked; you may also find some blueberries, but they are scarcely ripe yet, I expect."

The camping ground selected was in a fringe of birch and spruce trees, while the ground was covered with a thick carpet of rich green moss.

"Uncle George, let's get some trout for lunch," Charlie suggested.

"Right you are, we can fish from the shore and let us see who will catch the first fish. Now all start even. Come along, Mary, you must be in this competition."

No urging was necessary, and soon all six had their rods ready and each selected what seemed a good place. Mr. Pratt whispered something to Mrs. Sylvester and she chose a place immediately below where the small stream came in.

"Nothing under eight inches to count," called out Mr. Pratt, and everyone began as the signal was given.

The boys in their anxiety to beat their elders, cast fast and furious, scarcely giving time for

their flies to sink at all. The result was that they had a number of rises from fingerlings. Suddenly Mrs. Sylvester's rod was seen to be bending and her line zigzagging through the water. Almost at the same moment her husband had a good rise and hooked his fish. Then the fun began; the others were so interested that they forgot their own fishing and let their lines trail while they watched. Never were fish given less time to think about fighting, they were simply hustled toward the landing nets. Without a moment's warning Charlie's rod was almost pulled out of his hand; the fly, having sunk deep, was taken by a really good fish and he quickly forgot the others and had his hands more than full attending to his own task.

In the meantime, Mrs. Sylvester brought her fish to the net and landed it just a few seconds before her husband had secured his.

They were small trout weighing about a pound each, hers if anything being the larger.

Charlie, wildly delighted, called out that his fish was a salmon.

"I simply can't hold him, he's taking out all the line, what shall I do?"

Steve, seeing his difficulty, jumped into the canoe and brought it up to the excited boy, who in some way managed to scramble in without

letting the fish get off. His fears were by no means groundless for the line had nearly run out. The fish had got into the rough water and with the aid of the swift current would probably have broken loose, had the boy not been able to follow in the canoe.

Down they went till a large quiet pool was reached and here Steve held the canoe while Charlie played his prize. For half an hour the fight lasted, and then with Steve's help he landed a five-and-half-pound trout. His delight was boundless and he went ashore with a feeling of satisfied pride.

"If it hadn't been for your aunt, you would never have caught that," said Mr. Pratt. "It was because while watching her you let your line sink; and that's the best way in these waters. The big trout don't often come to the fly at the surface; he certainly is a beauty and not so very long up from the sea as you will notice by his still fairly bright colour."

The fishing was resumed and it was not long before they had plenty of trout for lunch; these were quickly fried and all hands fell to work with a will, for they were really as hungry as hunters.

After lunch it was decided to make the lean-tos and get everything ready for the night, before going out to explore the surrounding country.

A lot of bark had to be stripped, poles cut, and plenty of boughs for beds. With everyone helping, however, the work did not take long and in about an hour two lean-tos were finished, one for the family and a small one for the two guides.

Some big logs were then cut so that there would be firewood to last through the night, and by half-past two they were ready and started up to the barren, taking pails and cups to hold the berries they hoped to find.

It was the first time that any of them, except Mr. Pratt, had been on the barrens which are so peculiar to Newfoundland, and they were much interested in the great stretch of scrub-covered bog, with the endless small ponds, surrounded by the beautifully coloured mosses and yellow grass. From some of these ponds ducks flew up as the party approached. Then they heard a honking sound, and a flock of eleven wild geese rose with a heavy flapping of wings. They only flew a short distance and then alighted on the farther side of the barren.

“That’s a brood of young birds with their mother,” said Andrew. “The young chaps are not much on flying yet. If we’d been here a couple of weeks sooner, we could have caught them and they’d have been uncommon good eating.”

"How about the bake apples?" asked Jack.

Andrew looked about for a moment and said, pointing to a piece of flat bog, "That looks like a good place. Let's go there and see if we can't find some."

True enough, the place was covered with what looked like large yellow raspberries growing on a small plant close to the ground. The youngsters eagerly gathered some and declared them very good, and so they were, quite unlike anything they had ever tasted before. Though why they were called "bake apples" no one could tell.

"Now stop eating, you young rascals, and pick some for camp. When all the cups and pails are full you may eat as many as you want, but until then I want you to work," said Mrs. Sylvester.

They worked with a will and soon had every vessel filled. After that they were allowed to have a good feed. When they had had their fill the cups and pails were hidden on a small knoll, so that the jays could not find them, and the walk was continued. A search for beaver was suggested by Charlie, and Steve led them toward a stream which bordered the barren. There they found some fresh cuttings, but no sign of any lodges.

"The beaver wander about a good deal at this time of year looking over the country and finding good places to settle in," said Steve.

They followed the stream to its source, and there found a smaller one which came from a fairly large pond.

“That looks like a good place,” Steve remarked as they reached it, for he saw that there was a dam in very bad state of repair. His quick eye searched the borders of the pond and he said: “Sure enough, there’s a lodge. Now go very quietly and perhaps I can call out the beaver if they are in it.” Then he added, when the boys were within about forty yards of the tumble-down lodge, “You wait here”; and he crept forward very quietly to the edge of the water quite close to the lodge. After waiting a few minutes he leaned over and splashed the water with the axe, and began to call in a low, murmuring whine. For some time nothing happened, so he repeated it. By way of reply a few bubbles rose to the surface near by, and he held up his hand as a warning to the boys. A few moments elapsed and then a beaver appeared near the middle of the pond, but no sooner had he come to the surface than with a terrific slap of his tail he dived and was seen no more.

“What frightened him, Steve?” asked Charlie.

“Got our wind, so he won’t come up any more for a long while, and the slap on the water is the signal for any other beaver that may be about to let them know that danger is near, so they won’t

come up either. That was only a young beaver. If it had been a full-grown one that signal would have been more than twice as loud; sounds almost like a gun going off. Sometimes when you are watching a beaver pond in the quiet of an evening, and that's the best time, one of them will come up quite close without your seeing him. Then when he's made you out for certain, he'll give one tremendous crack on the water and mighty near scare you to death. After that, you might as well pack up and go home, for they'll all keep out of sight for a long time."

On examining the lodge, the boys were greatly disappointed. They had expected to find a regular story-book house. But this was the poorest type, built on shore over a burrow. In fact, it was nothing more than a mass of old sticks in a shapeless muddle.

"Well, I don't think much of that," Charlie remarked.

"That's not a regular house like you sometimes find," Steve explained, "but if you came here a month or two later you would find it quite different. For as soon as the cold weather starts, the beaver will build this up till it's a couple of feet higher, and plaster the whole thing over with mud except in the very middle, where the chimney is, so they can breathe."

"Do they really do that? I always thought that was one of the nature faker's stories," Mr. Sylvester said.

"Oh, it's true enough, I can assure you, for I have seen it hundreds of times; and in the very cold winter days you can see the steam rising out through that chimney quite plain. That's how we find the houses and know they are lived in when everything is covered two feet thick with snow. Perhaps we shall find a proper lodge built on a small island that will give you a better idea of what they should be like, and perhaps we can find a good dam, too. This one is only a lot of muck from the bottom of the pond and there's very little building about it. But some of the dams are hundreds of feet long and all built of logs and sticks."

"How I should like to see one," said Charlie.

"Well, perhaps I shall be able to find one before we leave. I might go off for a couple of days alone and hunt about, then if I find one I would take you to see it."

"And me, too," cried Jack.

"What about poor little me?" Evelyn asked, "Don't you suppose I want to see it just as much as you boys? Mother, mayn't I go, too?"

"That will depend on what sort of a trip it is; however, we'll see. The dam has not been found

yet, so there is no use getting so excited just now. Let's go along now and see what there is ahead of us."

The party soon came to a low hill, which had been burnt not many years before. All the trees were dead, standing or fallen, bleached silvery trunks and branches twisted and distorted, as though they had died in pain. The ground was found to be almost covered with low-growing blueberries, much to the boys' delight, and they proceeded to tuck in to their hearts' content, even though the berries were not thoroughly ripe.

"I say, Evie, aren't you glad we haven't got any old pails to fill?" said Jack.

Andrew heard the remark, and, with a curious smile on his face, walked away without saying a word. In about ten minutes he reappeared, carrying a couple of good-sized birch-bark "bags," and with a laugh he called out, "Now come along, boys, and let's fill them up."

Evelyn thought it a great joke and told Jack to be more careful next time. The berries were so abundant that it took a very short time to fill the receptacles, and the boys were once more allowed to have a feed.

"I think we had better be going back now, so that we can get a few trout for dinner," Mr. Sylvester remarked.

The idea met with general approval, and all started immediately for camp, picking up the bake apples as they went. The fishing proved most satisfactory, and before long enough trout had been caught to give sufficient both for dinner and breakfast.

The primitive camp was a great success, and they were all surprised to find how warm they were even though they had but one blanket apiece. Mr. Pratt explained that the lean-to acted like a reflecting oven and caught all the heat from the fire in front. During the night there was a very heavy rain, but the shelter was so well made that they all kept perfectly dry, and the youngsters thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

With the first peep of day the boys and Evelyn were up, as they wanted to catch some more fish.

While they were casting among the eddies a slight sound attracted their attention on the farther side of the river. To their delight, a beautiful gray caribou doe came along, feeding near the water's edge, followed by two playful fawns. Charlie crept back to the camp, and with great excitement told the others and urged them to come down as quietly as possible to see the animals. Without making any noise, they all made their way over the mossy ground and, hiding behind some bushes, they watched the graceful creatures. After a

while, the doe became suspicious and, without making the slightest sound, she vanished into the bushes followed by the two fawns.

“Weren’t they beautiful?” said Charlie. “What a shame it is to think of killing them, but I didn’t know that caribou had two young ones, did you, Mr. Pratt?”

“Oh, yes, that’s quite common, though of course they usually have only one. I quite agree with you that it’s a pity to shoot them, even the stags, for they are too easy to get, and after all the whole fun of shooting should be the difficulties that have to be overcome in getting near enough to the animals. But shooting caribou is rather like shooting barnyard cattle. It’s really the excuse for taking a fellow off in the wilds that makes most of us enjoy going after them; and even then if you hunt with a camera you have just as much fun, in fact more, I think. I know I have photographed a good many wild animals, and I certainly had more excitement getting the pictures than I have ever had in shooting. Most people, however, haven’t got the patience necessary for that sort of sport, and again many of us have a streak of the savage still in us which makes us want to kill wild animals. Most of us have to go through it. It really seems to be quite natural to us, especially boys, and strange to say the boy

who doesn't have that inclination is usually a namby-pamby, no matter what any one says to the contrary. I wouldn't give a rap for the boy who doesn't at heart *want* to hunt, and so long as he does it decently, I expect it's all right."

Charlie thought for a few moments in silence, then he said: "I can't understand it. I want so much to shoot and kill, and then after I kill anything, except fish, I always feel rather sorry; but still next time I get the chance, I always want to do it again. It does seem funny."

"Most of us go through that, Charlie, and I don't believe any of us ever understand our own feelings on the subject. It's much the same as boys fighting. They don't fight because they dislike the other fellow, but simply to show they can lick him, and I think it's about the way with shooting. We simply want to show that we are cleverer than the animal, and we think that killing it in a fair stalk proves it. However, let us change the subject. It's beyond us and we are not here to study psychology. How many fish did you catch this morning?"

"Only four," Charlie replied. "The biggest was about a pound and a half, but he did fight. Evelyn got a beauty, nearly two pounds, and Jack got five, I think. Don't you want to come and have a try? and Aunt Mary, won't you come, too?"

So they all went back for their rods and were busily engaged in fishing, when Andrew came down and said: "Breakfast is ready." That put an end to the sport, for all were ravenously hungry.

"Now what shall we do to-day?" Mr. Sylvester asked, after the meal was finished. "We've got till about three o'clock before thinking of going back to camp, and it's now eight-fifty. If any one has any suggestions, let's have them."

"How is it farther up the river?" Mrs. Sylvester asked Andrew. "Is there anything of especial interest or is it just about the same as we have already seen. If it is, I should advise a good walk up to the rough-looking mountain. I'm sure we should all like that."

"Well, ma'am, the river up above is much like what you have seen, except that it gets much narrower, and the current is so swift you can't make more than about one mile an hour. The first pond we strike is nearly six miles up. It's smaller than the one we crossed and leads into some other still smaller ones. We'd be likely to find beaver up there, but it's a good all-day job if we was to go to the best of them. There's good trout fishing up there, too. The mountain you spoke of is about four miles away, and it would take a good two hours and a half to get there, wouldn't it, Steve?"

"About tree ars go an' two come back, I t'ink; dat no good walk for missus."

"Don't you worry about me, Steve. I can go anywhere the others do, I can assure you," laughed Mrs. Sylvester. "Boys, what do you think of it?" she added.

"Oh, fine! We might see bears and caribou up there, mightn't we, Andrew?"

"Yes, it's a great place for bears because there's lots of berries, and where you find them that's where the bears go at this time of year."

"All right, let us go there. We can take a little grub with us, and we should start as soon as possible," said Mr. Sylvester, and then added: "Now come on, boys, get a move on; pack up the blankets so that we shall have everything ready to start back to camp as soon as we return. You can leave your rods out in case we have time to do a little fishing."

In ten minutes everyone was ready for the start, the bedding rolled and in waterproof bags, what was left of the food securely hidden from the jays, and the fire put out. For as Andrew remarked:

"It is never safe to leave a fire. Some sports I know were camped out one time, and they had those nice waxed-silk tents; they went off shooting and was gone from daylight till almost dark. It was in November and the weather was

awful cold. In the afternoon it snowed hard, and they kept saying to one another how fine it would be to get back to camp and get their camp stoves going, and all such talk; but when they got to where the camp had been, they found nothing much left. The tents had all burned up, the blankets was pretty badly scorched, and all their cartridges had gone off. Must have sounded like a regular fight while they were popping."

"But how in the world did things catch fire? for these woods seem to be always damp," said Charlie.

"So they are, but I expect a spark flew from the fire, for there was a strong wind blowing, and those tents burn like gunpowder. If it had been the common sort of tent, it would simply have made a hole in it. To tell the truth, I am always afraid to sleep in those new-fangled tents."

"Why couldn't you put snow on them, or even water?" Jack asked.

"Simply because it would not stay on. But that reminds me of a funny thing that happened to chaps I knew. They told me that they had camped out in winter, and one of their tents had burned up. So they thought the best thing would be to throw water all over the others. It was down about twenty-five below zero, so the water froze as fast as they throwed it on, and soon the

tent was just one big sheet of ice. Well, it happened that they had to break camp all of a sudden, but when they came to roll up the tents, they wouldn't roll. Just like boards they was. They couldn't even break the ice off, it was stuck so tight. It took them I don't remember how many hours to melt and scrape the ice away, and I don't believe they ever tried that trick again."

The way to the rocky mountain led them past the beaver pond they had visited the day before, but this time they could not coax out the owner of the dilapidated lodge. She may have been not at home, and that was Steve's explanation. Charlie noticed that there was very little timber growing round the beaver pond, and what there was consisted only of spruce and firs, neither of which furnished food to any extent. So he asked Steve what the animals lived on, and if they carried their supplies from the more distant woods.

"These pond beavers use the roots of the water lilies," he said, "when there are no trees near by. It saves them a lot of work, as they don't have to store wood but go out under the ice whenever they want a meal, and simply pull up a root and take it into the house to eat. These roots are very light. You see, they float, and when we shoot a beaver that is living on them he doesn't sink,

especially if he has just had a meal.”* Steve took up a partly-eaten root which was floating on the edge of the pond to show the boys, and continued: “These roots are not bad eating if one has nothing better, and many a man who has run short of grub has been glad to use them.”

“How do you eat them?” Charlie asked.

“To tell the truth, I have never tasted them at all, but I believe they can be either boiled or roasted, so the Indians tell me.”

“You said just now that the beaver store up wood for winter food. How do they get at it when everything is frozen? for I have read that they don’t come out of their house except under water after the winter begins.”

“That’s quite true, but they store their wood under water, quite close to the lodge.”

“But how do they make it stay there? Why doesn’t it float away, or get frozen into the thick ice?”

“That’s a very hard question to answer; but they do manage to anchor it to the bottom in some way, and they make such a big pile, twenty or thirty feet across and ten feet or more deep, according to the number of beaver that are in the lodge. We always believed that they can suck

*This is an idea of the Newfoundlanders, which is not based on fact, but is implicitly believed in by many of the trappers.

the air out of the wood and make it sink, but the sports laugh at me when I tell them this, so we may be wrong; but I notice that none of those city chaps can tell us how they get the wood to the bottom and make it stay there. Many a time I have watched the beaver bringing wood to the pile, and I sometimes think they make it sink by keeping on piling up the brush on top and so sinking it, and when they get it caught at the bottom then they drag each piece as they bring it down under the water and stick it into the pile, because I have seen them dive with a branch and then the whole pile shakes, and the beaver comes up without the branch. It's very hard to explain lots of their work, and I guess they have more brains than lots of people I have met, because they certainly do the most wonderful things. If you were to read of the things they do, you would never believe them."

"Oh, I do wish we could find a good-sized colony and have a chance of seeing some of these wonderful things they do," Charlie said with enthusiasm.

"It's really too early to see them at work now," Steve replied. "About the middle of October is the best time, then everything is going at full swing, lodges building, dams being put up or repaired, and trees being cut; and some of the trees

are so big you would not believe it possible that the little animals could cut them down. Why, I have seen birches more than thirty inches through that they have cut, but they usually choose trees about six to ten inches, because they are much more easy to handle."

CHAPTER V

THEY HAVE AN INTERESTING EXPERIENCE WITH BEAR
—CATCH MORE FISH—RETURN TO CAMP AND LEARN
A GREAT MANY MORE THINGS, AND THE HOLIDAY
ENDS. THEY ARE BACK IN BOSTON

NOW we are coming to the berry ground,” said Steve, “and we had better keep very quiet as we might see a bear.”

But nothing was seen except the tracks of a very large bear that had been making a meal of the blueberries. Steve and Andrew examined the tracks carefully and the rest of the party followed. Bruin had not been very serious in his work, but had simply eaten here and there as he walked through the burnt ground.

“I’ll bet he’s gone to that other patch over there, where we found the old chap last year,” Andrew remarked.

The place he referred to was on the line to the rocky mountain, so they continued on their way, going cautiously and making no noise. Steve kept some distance in front, and after about half an hour, they noticed him crawling along as though he had seen something. Soon he looked

back and beckoned to them to come carefully. So all got down on hands and knees and approached without making any noise. The stalking was not in vain, for out in a small burnt patch, where berries were so numerous that the ground was tinged with blue, was an old she-bear and two well-grown cubs, all eating away with great gusto; the peculiar slopping sound that they made as they chewed the sweet berries was distinctly audible. Steve greatly regretted the lack of a rifle, but the others only thought of the interesting picture, which would have been so entirely destroyed by shooting.

For over half an hour they watched the family, and could scarcely refrain from laughing aloud at the antics of the cubs, as they cuffed each other and often stopped to play like a pair of children. Once in a while, when the mother had found a particularly fine lot of berries, one of the cubs would try to steal it from her, and would receive a most convincing clout on the head for his pains. On one occasion, both the cubs approached her as she was about to enjoy an extra good lot, and as she turned to cuff one, the other cub made a grab at the fruit. Just as he got it, his mother turned on him and he bolted with a grunt of great satisfaction.

His mother, however, thought he deserved a les-

son in filial respect and ran after him. Round and round they ran—in ever-increasing circles, coming closer and closer to the very much amused spectators, until finally the cub made a bolt straight for where they were lying and came within about ten feet before discovering them, then regardless of his mother's approach, he stopped, stood up, and stared at the strange creatures. His fond parent, thinking only of the punishment she intended to inflict, came on, and rising on her hind legs dealt the cub a smart cuff on the side of the head, which sent him sprawling.

At the same moment, she caught sight of the intruders. A low grunt, and she stood up to her greatest height, with her two arms hanging by her sides, while she inspected them. Had she been the bear of the story-books and people's fertile imaginations, she would then and there have attacked and killed the whole party; but she was a "really truly bear," and as such she decided to bolt. Off she went at a lively shuffling gallop for a hundred yards or so, followed by the surprised cubs, and then stopped and, turning round, took a long look at the party who were now standing. The two cubs, following her example, stood up, too. For a moment the boys thought they would be attacked, but the bears having satisfied their curiosity went off and were soon lost in the surrounding scrub.

"Aunt Mary, wasn't that great!" Charles exclaimed.

"It certainly was. I don't think I ever saw anything so interesting. What do you think of that, Andrew? I don't expect that even you often see such sights, do you?" she asked.

"No, ma'am. We surely don't. I never seen anything to equal it and I have been going in the woods since I was nine years old, but I was mortal afraid the old she-bear would come for us because they're awful ugly when they have cubs, and I'll bet if they'd been a bit younger she'd have made things lively for us."

"I say, Evie, wasn't it luck we came this way?" said Charlie, as they walked along.

"Rather; I never enjoyed anything so much in my life; did you, Jack?"

"Never; but it's jolly lucky she didn't attack us. We wouldn't have enjoyed that, I'll bet."

"It made me shiver when she stood up and stared at us, and she was so close, but wasn't it funny the way she knocked that cub down. I could scarcely keep myself from laughing out loud; but when she looked at us she seemed so tremendous that I was much too frightened to laugh. I expect all of us were. Were you frightened, Dad?"

"Well, to tell the honest truth, I was; for I

have always heard such terrible stories of how wild animals will attack any one if they have their young with them, haven't you, Fred?"

"Yes, but I confess that I believe most of what one hears on the subject is much exaggerated. I know of a fellow who caught a lion's cub in East Africa, because he wanted to coax the parents near to him so that he could get a photograph of them, and though he and his men held the cub while it squealed, they never were able to coax the lion and lioness to come and eat them up. They would not come within two hundred yards in spite of the cub's cries. So you see you can't always count on what animals will do."

"But I always heard that, no matter what happened, a lion would invariably protect its young," said Jack.

"That's the common belief, but, like many other ideas of wild animals, it is not entirely correct."

"How about the photograph? Did the men get it?" asked Charlie.

"No. Two hundred yards was too far away, and the fellow thought that, of course, the lions would come, and he kept waiting until suddenly they turned and ran off. Twice more they came back, but never within range of the camera."

"And yet I've seen deer and moose go nearly crazy when their young have been caught," said

Mr. Sylvester. "I know we caught a young moose in the water one day, and the mother would certainly have capsized the canoe if we hadn't let it go."

"That's just it, George," Mr. Pratt replied. "You can never tell what animals will do, and it's the thing you least expect that generally happens. At least, that has been my experience."

"Andrew, what do the bears eat when there are no berries?" Charlie asked.

"Pretty nearly everything, from caribou to salmon, as well as roots and all sorts of fruit and honey. I think fruit is what they like best, and as blueberries are the commonest and most easy to get they eat these more than anything I know of. From August till well into November, they can get all they want of them in the burnt lands, and unfortunately there are plenty of fires in this country."

"Doesn't the frost spoil the berries?" Mrs. Sylvester inquired.

"Well, it do take the sweetness out of them and spoils them for preserving."

"Do you use them much?"

"Quite a bit, but preserving them takes so much sugar and the jars cost a lot; still, we put up a fair lot. You can keep them pretty well by sinking them under water. That is, if you don't

get a spell of warm weather. If you do they are likely to spoil, but if the water is cold enough and the berries are in right condition, they keep for a long time that way."

While they were talking, the party reached the beginning of the steep climb up to the summit of the hill. The ground was covered with coarse granite, which was much flaked by the severe frosts and gave evidence of the severe cold of this region. It took the explorers nearly an hour to reach the peak, but the wonderful view of the country more than repaid their efforts. Below they could see the river up which they had come, and far off in the blue mist the sea was visible. Back of them the ground continued to rise in gradual slopes, most of which were covered with short scrubby growth through which granite protruded here and there.

"We might find some partridges up here," suggested Andrew, so they went across the open stretch of country. They had not gone more than a quarter of a mile before they heard the sound of birds calling in the scrub. "That's them," said Andrew. "Now spread out and walk fast, or they will run off and you won't see them."

All immediately did as he directed, and soon they had the pleasure of seeing the birds running ahead, stopping now and then on a piece of rock

to have a look at the strange creatures that were disturbing them.

"They are really ptarmigan not partridge," Mr. Pratt announced.

The birds were very little afraid and let the party come to within a few feet of them, then sometimes they would fly, but only go a few yards.

"Let's get some for dinner," Jack suggested.

"No, sir. The law's on them and you'd get well punished if you killed them," said Andrew.

"Bother the law," Jack replied. "It would be so easy to kill them with stones, and I suppose they are jolly good eating, aren't they, Andrew?"

"The best thing you ever tasted, especially the young ones."

Then Mr. Pratt added: "It's a curious thing, you know what a poor bird the European ptarmigan is, dry and flavourless; well these are, as Andrew says, the best birds you ever put your teeth into. Many a good meal of them have I had, and they are deliciously juicy and with quite a peculiar flavour."

"Speaking of eating," Jack remarked, "let's have our lunch. I'm simply famished." The idea met with general approval, and a place was selected near where a small and ice-cold spring flowed out of the side of the mountain. Soon a fire was started and before long the inevitable

pot was boiling, ready for tea, without which no Newfoundlander considers a meal worth eating.

Having satisfied the inner man, they all started back toward camp. On the way they saw a stag in the distance, but as the wind was behind them they made no attempt to get close to it, for as Andrew said, he would smell them half a mile away. This proved almost true. Before they were within six hundred yards, the big creature raised his head, sniffed a few times, then trotted off into the woods which encircled the barren.

“What wonderful noses they must have,” Charles remarked to his uncle. “Just imagine being able to smell us at that distance. Wouldn’t it be fine if we could use our noses to hunt with. Think how easy it would be for us to find animals.”

“That’s true enough, but with the advantage we have in using firearms which kill at such long range, the wretched animals would have no chance at all. Even as it is, with our less acute hearing, and about equally good eyesight, we have things rather too much in our favour. That is why the game laws have to be made so strict. If we had absolute freedom to kill as much as some of us want, and there were no close season, the animals and birds would soon be exterminated. If that happened the greatest part of our fun on these

trips would be gone. Nothing is more dreary than to go through country where there are neither birds nor animals. Some day I'll take you to Florida and show you what real bird life is. There you see thousands of birds every day, and dozens of species. I know of nothing more delightful than to canoe along some of those Southern rivers and lakes and watch the endless number of birds. Then for animals, I think we shall have to get Mr. Pratt to lead us into some of the favourite East African hunting-grounds, so that we can see what he has often told us of; the vast herds of big game swarming over the veldt just as we imagine they did in the prehistoric days. We'll try to arrange a trip there as soon as you two get through college."

"Would you take me, too, Dad?" Evelyn asked.

"I expect we'd have to if you look so pathetic about it," he laughed; "but you must learn to shoot well, for you never know at what minute your life may depend on a good shot. Girls who shut their eyes when they fire can't expect to hit anything."

Everyone laughed, for that was what Evelyn always did.

"It isn't like up here where if you make a miss it simply means going without meat or losing a pair of horns."

"Oh, I say, Andrew, is this whitish moss the stuff the caribou feed on?" Charlie asked, as they came to a place where the ground was thickly covered with reindeer moss.

"Yes, sir, that's their chief food, even when it's covered with snow they dig their way to it. Men use it, too, when they are very hard up for food."

Charlie immediately picked a piece and tasted it. The result was a very wry face.

"Why, you don't eat it raw. It has to be boiled for several hours before it's fit to eat. What it's like then, I don't know, but I reckon it ain't up to much unless you are uncommon hungry, when anything tastes good, even snakes and frogs, I'm told, but I don't quite believe that."

"I don't know about the snakes, but frogs are really delicious. Why, you pay a dollar and a half for a small plate of them in Boston," said Mr. Sylvester.

"A dollar and a half for frogs! Well, they'd have to pay me a thousand times that amount before I'd touch them," and Andrew shuddered at the very idea of eating such a delicacy.

The party reached the temporary camp at two o'clock. The men suggested a cup of tea before starting, and as there was plenty of time this was agreed to. So while they lighted a fire the others

had a try at fishing. The trout, however, were not rising, so they had very poor luck, getting only fourteen between them and they were not large.

Soon after three they loaded up the canoes and headed down stream. The water was just the right height for a good run, and the canoes raced through the foam-flecked rapids as though they were alive and enjoying it. The boys thought it grand fun and were only sorry when they came to the lake, which meant a good stiff paddle as the wind was blowing fresh, making the water too rough for comfort in the light craft. To be drier and safer, they skirted the shore which was strewn with the whitened limbs of dead trees, which looked like fantastic skeletons, and, as Evelyn remarked, it seemed as though a great battle had been fought between strange beasts and these were their bleached bones.

Beyond a few fish duck (Mergansers) nothing was seen in the way of bird life. Somewhat tired from the long paddle against the wind, the party finally reached the river, down which, in spite of its roughness, it was decided to go by canoe rather than walk. The going was difficult and several times the canoes had narrow escapes.

Once, while going down a rapid, one of the canoes struck a submerged rock, and had it not

been for Steve's quickness in jumping out, lifting the canoe, and jumping in again, it would have been swamped, as the canoe was about to swing broadside on to the swift water. It was a close shave, but no one was the worse except Steve, who got a thorough wetting. That, however, he did not mind in the least. No Newfoundlander minds water, if they did their life would be one of continual worry.

The travellers arrived at camp thoroughly tired after the long day, and so hungry that they could scarcely wait for dinner to be served. Billy had a very mysterious smile when he told them the meal was ready. "And I surely hope you'll like it," he said. To their surprise, they found that the men had made quite a respectable table out of several boxes and some split birch. Also there were seats arranged for their greater comfort, but what interested the boys most of all was a large birch-bark boat-shaped vessel carefully covered with a strip of bark. What could be in that, they wondered? Billy raised the lid when they were all seated and disclosed over a dozen fine, bright red lobsters.

"Well, Billy, this *is* a surprise. Where in the world did you get them?" asked Mrs. Sylvester.

To which the smiling cook replied: "A cousin of mine lives a few miles below here and he has a

lobster canning factory, so I thought I'd go down and see if I could get him to let me have a few, for I guessed they'd taste pretty good to you. When I got to his place they had just come from the pots and were cooking the lobsters. A fine catch they had, too. So he just gave me this lot and said as how he hoped you'd enjoy them, and if you wanted some more any time to let him know."

"That's extremely good of him," she replied. "Couldn't we go down some day and see his factory? I'm sure it would be most interesting. He would not object, would he?"

"No, ma'am, he certainly wouldn't. His old woman, too, would be awful proud to see you for she don't often have a chance of seeing vistsors."

Next morning, salmon fishing started again. The water was just right and the rain had brought in a great many new fish from the sea. Never had the family enjoyed such a day's sport. Among the various members nineteen salmon and grilse were actually landed. Mr. Sylvester got the record for the day in point of size, his largest fish weighing twenty-four pounds. Jack and Charlie had each a salmon on at the same time in a small pool, so their excitement can well be imagined; fortunately the fish were small and could be controlled to a certain extent, but several times their

lines nearly crossed, and only by frantic efforts was the situation saved.

Charlie was very anxious that Evelyn should get a good fish, and, having had a rise from one that seemed a fair size, he left it and went for Evelyn, who was at a pool some way below. She, of course, was delighted at the prospect and followed Charlie as fast as the nature of the ground allowed. These two were devoted to one another, and nothing pleased him so much as giving her pleasure.

Having reached the pool, he helped her to put on the right fly, and then stood by while she cast over the submerged rock behind which the fish was lurking. For fully ten minutes nothing happened, then a slight swirl showed that there was still hope, and at the next cast there was a mighty splash as the fish bounded half out of the water with the fly. Then the fun began, and poor little Evelyn had her hands full. In vain did she try to get in line, but the fish was too strong for her, and she had to let him have his way. Round and round the pool he went, jumping clear of the water every once in a while and scattering the drops in a glistening mass from his silver body. Several times the plucky girl nearly cried with the strain on her arms and wrists, but she would not give in that she was tired.

"No, no," she replied in a quivering voice each time Charlie wanted to help. "It's my fish and he's such a whopper, I simply must land him by myself; but please keep the gaff ready, for he must be nearly done."

But no, the fish was as fresh as ever, and kept her altogether over an hour wondering whether she could possibly hold on. Then suddenly after a frantic rush from one end of the pool to the other, he gave up the fight, thoroughly beaten. The line was reeled in slowly and the salmon brought close to where Charlie was standing in two feet of water. Very carefully he got the gaff in position, and with a well-aimed stroke killed the fish. He then dragged it ashore, and Evelyn collapsed alongside of it, while he did a regular wild man's dance of delight.

"How much will he weigh, Charlie? About twenty pounds, I should think."

"Oh, no, Evie. About ten or twelve more likely; but didn't he fight, and you certainly did handle him jolly well. Won't they be surprised to see it in camp?"

"But, Charlie," she said, "I feel like a regular pig, for this would have been yours. You found it and you really ought to have it, oughtn't you?"

"Never you mind, old girl, I've had just as

much fun watching you as if I had caught it myself. And anyhow I got one this morning just about the same size, so I've had my share. And I did so want you to get a big one. I'll bet there are not many girls of your age that have caught a salmon that size. If you like, I'll skin it for you and then we'll get it mounted."

"Oh, that would be fine, and I can show it to that nasty Ethel Banks, who thinks she is the only girl that knows anything about fishing and is so proud of that miserable little bass that she has mounted in the dining room and shows to everyone. I should just like to make her feel cheap, for she's so beastly conceited. But Charlie, how much will it cost to have it mounted properly? You know, I've got very little money left."

"Don't worry, I'll have it done for a birthday present for you. It will just be about the right time and I have still got some of that money I was given last Christmas."

"Yes, but you were saving that up to get those books on natural history that we saw in the shop."

"Never mind those, old girl, they can wait, and anyhow I don't need them so awfully badly." Then, after a pause, he added: "Let's go along now. We've both had enough for to-day and we can show this beauty to the others as we go down the

river, then we'll weigh it and I'll get to work at the skinning."

They found Mrs. Sylvester watching her husband playing a pretty good fish, but he managed to have a look at Evelyn's catch and congratulate her, while Mrs. Sylvester fairly beamed with pride and happiness at Evelyn's good luck. On reaching camp the fish was weighed, and found to be just eleven and a half pounds. Charlie lost no time in starting the skinning, but he found it harder than he expected and his knife was not sharp enough. So Steve offered to help with his "crooked knife" which was as keen as a razor, and which he said was the most useful thing, next to an axe, that a man could carry. The skin was finally removed and rolled in salt, so that it would keep in good condition until it reached the taxidermist. By the time the results of the day's catch were brought in, it was decided that a smoke-house had better be built.


"It's bad luck to build one until the fish are caught," Andrew remarked, "for if you do you never catch any."

The smoke-house was a sort of rough teepee of bark and boughs and moss. Inside there were cross pieces of green wood from which the split and slightly salted fish were hung. Then a fire was started with red-hot embers from the camp

fire and carefully smothered, so that it produced a dense volume of smoke. This would be kept going for nearly a week.

The fishing during the next few days was only fairly good, and the boys got tired of casting for hours without getting a rise. So they decided to get Steve to teach them something about tree cutting. This he proceeded to do, showing them how to drop a tree exactly where it was wanted by making a clean, straight cut facing directly to where it should fall. The axes which the boys had brought with them did not satisfy Steve at all. The handles or helves were not nearly long enough, so that far too much energy was expended for the results obtained.

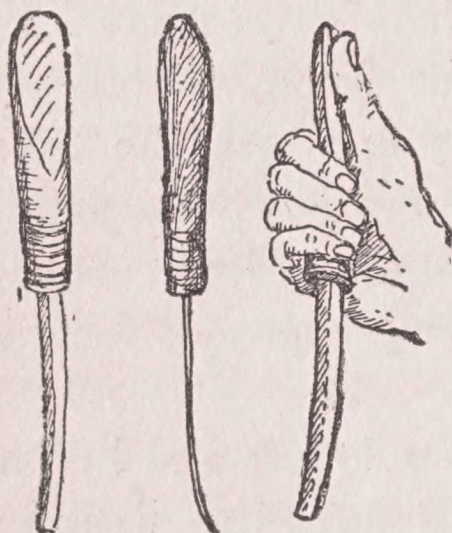
“Now I’ll make you each a longer and better shaped handle,” he said, and forthwith went in search of a suitable tree. “Hash (ash) is the best,” he explained, “but birch will do,” and he soon found a young straight tree which would answer the purpose. With a few strokes of his keen-edged axe he had the tree down. After cutting it into two lengths, with the axe he proceeded to trim these roughly into the required shape. Then taking out the always useful “crooked knife,” he soon had the clean white helves cut to the proper size and shape. Within less than an hour and a half from the time he had begun, the



two axes were ready for use. What a difference it made. The new handles were long, light, and springy so that they exactly balanced the heads. With them the boys found they could cut very much better and with scarcely any exertion.

"Where can we get a knife like you have, Steve?" Charlie asked.

"I don't know," he replied, "but if you like I'll give you mine when this trip is finished, as I have another at home, and perhaps Andrew will give you one, too. You will find them much more useful than those store knives."



CROOKED KNIFE

"Will you swop yours for mine," said Charlie, showing him his fancy

store knife which contained everything from a pair of scissors to a clumsy instrument for taking stones out of horses' hoofs. It had cost about six dollars, while Steve's home-made contrivance was worth perhaps thirty cents in cash, though for practical work it was worth ten or twenty times as much as the more expensive one. Steve was not naturally greedy, but to be the proud possessor of that wonderful pocket compendium of tools filled his heart with pleasure, and

he readily agreed to the "swap," much to the satisfaction of both parties. Jack determined to try to effect a similar exchange with Andrew, and was able to do so a little later without the slightest difficulty.

Poor Old John was very envious. "I'd have been glad to give you *three* of those old crooked knives for one like yours," he said to Jack. Unfortunately, however, he did not happen to have one, let alone three.

During the evening the boys used to enjoy sitting with the men and listening to their stories and experiences in trapping and hunting; of the great winter trips after caribou, when, armed with all sorts of weapons and often dressed in white, the native population would go in numbers back in the wilds where the caribou herded during the bitter cold weather; how they would drive the wretched animals past the men who lay concealed in the snow. Each man would let the herd go past and only fire at the last of the line, so that the other caribou would keep on going. In this way the people got the only fresh meat they ever tasted during the year.

Now owing to the new and stricter game laws only three head could be shot by each person but, as whole families went together on these excursions and each member was entitled to three caribou, it would be difficult to discover who did the actual

killing. Sometimes on these hunts terrific snowstorms would cause great suffering and hardship, and many a time it was a question of whether they would ever get out alive. All the meat was dragged out on sleds, pulled by men and women, children and dogs.

To all of these accounts the boys listened with the keenest interest and asked innumerable questions. In many ways the accounts of trapping proved most enthralling. Old John told how he had been off with a pal who during the winter had the misfortune to fall and break his leg. It was a thirty-mile tramp to where he could send word for a doctor. As soon as the doctor came by train the old man started off with him to cover the thirty miles of rough country. When about half way, a frightful blizzard made walking almost impossible. Their faces froze as they tried to beat their way against the icy wind and the driving snow which cut their skin. For twenty-four hours they struggled ahead, not daring to stop except for breath, occasionally, and finally reached the hut, only just in time, for the man had fainted, and would undoubtedly have frozen to death within a short time, as the fire had gone out.

The boys learned that trapping was not all fun as they had always imagined it to be. Andrew told them of two old cousins of his who had gone

off, no one knew where. They claimed to have found a place where silver foxes were wonderfully plentiful, and they took the greatest pains to conceal their tracks so that no one should be able to follow them. They said that they would be back late in the winter with skins enough to make them both rich men. Nothing was heard of the pair again, until during the following spring one was found crushed and mangled in an ice jam on a river. What had happened no one ever knew. The other man had never been heard of again, and it was more than two years since he had left his home, so full of hope. It was to have been their last winter in the woods, and so it proved.

The lengthening evenings passed very rapidly with these chats, and the boys learned more than they realized. Unconsciously they were finding out how men live in wild countries, how they have to fight for the necessities of life, and how they protect themselves against the many dangers which must be encountered by those who are pioneers.

The party spent the days in fishing and exploring the surrounding country. Steve went off for three days in search of a good beaver colony but without success. Each beaver pond he found showed that the animals had been caught, for all the lodges and dams were broken and scarcely

any signs of fresh cuttings could he find. This was a great disappointment to the boys who had looked forward to seeing a really good colony.

At last the holiday drew to an end. It had been in every way a great success. All had caught as many fish as they wished, and they had enjoyed every hour of each day.

When the day for leaving arrived, it was with deep regret that they bade good-bye to the river that had given them such splendid sport, and to the camp which everyone had enjoyed. The journey back to Boston was entirely uneventful, and all arrived home ready to undertake whatever work lay before them. Evelyn's salmon was mounted in due course and given to her by Charlie on her thirteenth birthday. It was shown in triumph to Ethel Banks, who remarked with indifference: "Not bad; but I hear they are very easy to catch."

PART II
GETTING LOST IN THE WILDS

CHAPTER VI

THEY GO TUNA FISHING AND THE LAUNCH BREAKS
DOWN—A BIG STORM COMES—THEY SEE WHALES
AND ARE WRECKED

NEARLY two years have elapsed since the events chronicled in the preceding chapters, and now once more a trip to Newfoundland is being planned. This time it is to be Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and the party consists only of Mr. Sylvester, Jack, and Charlie. Again fishing is the object of the trip; not salmon, but something very much larger and even more exciting, for they are after tuna, the biggest game fish that can be caught with rod and line.

Along the coast of Nova Scotia the tuna are found during the summer and autumn, feeding on squid and herring. In point of size they make the salmon appear a mere dwarf, for they run up well over a thousand pounds, and their strength is so great that they will tow two men in a boat thirty or forty miles without any apparent effort.

Such, then, is what is taking our friends away from the broiling heat of Boston on the 21st of July.

Mr. Sylvester had some doubts as to whether he would be allowed to enjoy the six weeks he had promised himself for his holiday, for there was persistent rumour of European war in which practically the whole world would be involved. Such rumours had many times disturbed the peace of mind of the nervous and pessimistic. Mr. Sylvester, being neither the one nor the other, believed that the chance of such a war was too remote to worry about, and so he and the boys went fishing.

A Nova Scotian fishing boat converted into a serviceable yacht had been bought, and with it a motor launch and a small boat known as the tuna boat. She was twelve feet long, sharp at both ends, very light, and very good in a sea.

By steamer and train, Mr. Sylvester and the boys went to Liverpool (Nova Scotia). There they embarked on their boat, and sailed off with a crew consisting of a captain and two men, all of whom came from Tan Cook Island, which is famous for its men and its fishing boats. The captain, whose name was Blunt, had spent all his life fishing, and what he did not know about fish, boats, and the weather of this part of the world was scarcely worth knowing. Tuna fishing he regarded as a waste of good time.

“What’s the use of bothering with trying to land

one of them big tuna with that sort of tackle?" pointing at the thin linen line, small sharp hook, and short rod, "when with a shark hook and a good bit of rope you can be sure of them."

"Yes, but think of the excitement and fun of actually catching such an enormous creature on so small a line," said Mr. Sylvester, who was quite prepared for this sort of argument.

"Excitement, yes. You'll find it's excitement enough when you get one towing you out to sea at six miles an hour, like I saw one do to a chap off this very coast two or three years ago. The blessed fish towed him for nine hours, and then got off because the rod broke, and during the time he was gone we caught two, weighing about a thousand pounds each, with shark hooks while we was hauling our herring nets. It's all right enough if it amuses you, and I only hopes you won't have nothing go wrong; but I tell you honest, it's dangerous."

"But that makes it all the better, doesn't it, Dad?" asked Jack. "He doesn't think we *can* catch one with this light tackle," he added, as the Captain walked forward.

There was a light breeze, and the graceful little schooner glided through the water like a huge bird, her bright tan sails gleaming in the afternoon sun. The plan was to go east along the coast to the first

harbour, where they expected to find some fishing boats, whose owners would be able to tell them whether the tuna were about. As the wind gradually died down toward evening their speed grew less and less, until when they came to the mouth of the harbour the vessel had scarcely steerage way, but fortunately the tide was setting in and carried them up to where a small fleet of trim boats was lying. Coming near them, she anchored, and, as soon as the sails were stowed, the Captain went in the tuna boat to find out what the prospects were. He returned in half an hour with the bad news that the men had seen no tuna, but they had heard that some had been seen farther east. So it was decided that early next morning they would set out in search of the great fish, wherever they might be.

As soon as day broke, the *Sea-gull*, for that was the schooner's name, got under way in company with the fleet, and a beautiful sight it was. There were about forty schooners, each as finely modelled as the most graceful yacht, with sails varying from snowy white to deep tan colour, running out to sea with wings spread to catch all they could of the fair but light breeze.

Outside the islands which guarded the harbour's entrance, the *Sea-gull* parted company with the other vessels, which were off to visit their nets ten miles

out from land, and continued the course along the low rocky coast, where the surging breakers from the long ocean swell tore themselves to foaming atoms against the sturdy rocks.

"It's a bad coast, sir," remarked Captain Blunt, "cruel bad, especially when the fog sets in, as it does with scarcely any warning. One minute the sun is shining so hot you need your straw hat on, and the next minute the fog has you tight. You got to keep your eyes open when you are round this neighbourhood."

At that moment, the boys both caught sight of a curious disturbance in the water some distance ahead, and asked the Captain what he thought it was. For a few seconds he stared in silence.

"Grampus, and a big school of them, too," he said, and he quickly headed the *Sea-gull* toward them.

"Shall we be able to get close enough to see them properly? and what are grampus? I've read about them but cannot seem to remember what they are," said Charlie.

"They're whales, small whales. Some calls 'em black-fish. They come here sometimes to play about, like you see them doing over yonder, for a couple of hours or more, and then suddenly they're gone."

Gradually the schooner came to where the grampus were playing. The Captain brought her down wind of them and then let her come to, so that she stopped almost still within a few yards of the great creatures that were playing, diving, snorting, and blowing fine columns of spray. They seemed to be in endless numbers, fully a hundred Captain Blunt estimated, and, what was most strange, they paid not the slightest attention to the vessel, which was slowly moving into their midst. Some of the creatures appeared to be about thirty feet long, but it was difficult to judge with any accuracy, as they kept rolling one over the other in ceaseless confusion. They bumped against the sides of the vessel and made her shake from stem to stern, but still they paid no attention to her as she slowly gathered way, for the Captain was letting her sails fill.

Soon the *Sea-gull* was clear of the last of the school and heading once more on her way. The boys were very anxious to know whether the grampus was of any value, and Captain Blunt said that, beyond oil, they furnished nothing worth bothering about so far as he knew. The oil, he had been told, was used especially by watch-makers. The boys continued to watch the seething mass of grampus for a long time when suddenly the commotion stopped. Evidently they had started

off to sea again. Late in the afternoon the vessel was taken into a small harbour for the night, and the Captain ascertained from the local fishermen that no tuna had been seen.

"I think, sir, we shall have to go up near Sydney, or perhaps even farther north along the Labrador or Newfoundland coast, for that is where I believe the fish are before they come down this way," Captain Blunt said on his return to the schooner.

The suggestion seemed a good one and the voyage to Sydney was undertaken. Fortunately, fine weather prevailed and they reached North Sydney without mishaps. From all information received, the tuna were not to be found in their usual haunts, and the general belief was that they had not yet appeared. Squid and herrings were unusually scarce, so that gave colour to the inference.

Accordingly the more northern waters were decided on, though the Captain said he feared the little schooner was rather small for the job. A stiff easterly breeze took the fishermen across the Cabot Strait, and they were delighted with the way the schooner behaved; her buoyancy was remarkable, and she took the heavy seas like a duck. Once under the lea of Newfoundland the sea was calm enough but the wind very gusty; severe squalls coming from the mountains made it necessary

to carry very little sail and keep a sharp look-out. At night they always made harbour, as the crew was too small for night watches.

On reaching St. Georges, they got in some fresh provisions and headed northwest, over toward the Labrador coast.

After a couple of days of cruising about they met a small fishing boat, which reported having seen tuna on the previous day. This sounded hopeful and encouraged them just when they were beginning to think that the tuna were a myth.

Following the directions they received regarding the whereabouts of the fish, and having secured some bait, they were delighted when, during the next morning, they actually saw tuna. It did not take them long to get ready. The two boys took the launch, while Mr. Sylvester with Tom Anderson, one of the crew, went in the small boat. The weather was almost unnaturally calm and the water like oil.

As they started away, the Captain warned them to keep a good look-out, for when the breeze came it might be bad. Mr. Sylvester dropped his baited hook into the water and slowly trolled along; suddenly a terrific tug nearly pulled the rod from his hands and the line simply flew from the reel. Fifty, a hundred, a hundred and fifty feet spun out and continued to go so fast that he did not

dare put on the drag. When about six hundred feet had gone, and in order to relieve the strain, the boat was being rowed as fast as the man could make it go, following the fish, when Mr. Sylvester gradually applied the drag. The fish seemed to feel the resistance, and, giving a frantic jerk, broke loose. It was bad luck, but still encouraging, and the boys who were near by in the launch were greatly excited. On pulling in the line it was found to have parted where it had been fastened to the wire trace. To avoid a repetition of the disaster, a piece of thick leather was wrapped round the wire loop to prevent it cutting the line, and with this Mr. Sylvester again began trolling.

For fully half an hour nothing broke the monotony of the sounds of rowing and the occasional chug-chug of the launch as the boys accompanied the boat at a distance of about two hundred yards. They got farther and farther from the schooner, which was lying becalmed, with her coloured sails flapping from side to side as she rolled gently on the oily swell.

Whirr-r-r; another fish had struck, and once more the line flew through the water, and as the boat gathered way the drag was very gradually applied. The strain, as the line was checked, bent the stiff rod farther and farther. Soon the reel was held tight, and the boat was

being towed so fast that no rowing was required, but now and then when the fish made a particularly vicious effort, it was necessary to let the line pay out. The launch, keeping astern and slightly to one side, followed, and the boys thoroughly enjoyed watching the small boat dancing along over the water, scattering the spray from the bows and moving along at nearly five miles an hour towed by the unseen power.

Dark clouds were banking up on the horizon and fitful gusts of wind disturbed the surface of the water, but no one noticed it. On and on they went, and once the huge fish leaped clear of the water with a wonderful display of power. Fortunately (or as it turned out, unfortunately) the hook held and the race continued. At the end of two hours the wind began to increase with alarming force, but still the fight with the fish went on. The spray from the choppy sea dashed over the boat and soaked the occupants, but their blood was up and they thought of nothing but the pursuit.

In the meantime, something went wrong with the motor of the launch. It would go a few minutes then stop; finally it stopped altogether and the boat began to sail before the wind while the boys tried to find out what was wrong. So interested were they that for nearly half an

hour they tinkered away without looking up, and when they did so the tuna boat had entirely disappeared. Far away they could discern the schooner, almost out of sight. The ever-increasing force of the wind made it necessary for the boys to keep well in the stern of the boat to prevent her swinging beam on to the sea, which was getting rougher every minute.

"What in the world are we going to do, Charlie? It looks like a regular old-fashioned gale."

"Oh, cheer up. We'll land somewhere. The wind seems to be shifting about, so that I have lost all idea of direction. There's nothing in sight but water—beastly rough water, too; and look at that sky. Isn't it jolly black? I expect we are in for trouble, but we must make the best of it. If we could only get the engine to go I'd feel better, because then, if we saw any land or a ship, we would steer for it; but as it is, we must be careful to keep straight before the wind or we'll get swamped."

"Let's put on our oilskins, so as to keep dry at any rate, because it's getting beastly cold," said Jack.

Harder and harder blew the wind, carrying with it the crests of the white-capped waves and making the launch go with ever-increasing speed. As she went she rolled from side to side in an alarming way,

and as the height of the waves became greater it was found more and more difficult to prevent her yawing. Even with the greatest care occasional waves broke against the sides and splashed into her.

"I say, Jack, we must really bail. Do you see how much water we have? It's getting serious. I wonder if we can use the pump."

They tried, but it was slow work on account of the ceaseless rolling. In the end it was found easier to bail with a large tin, but even this was nearly blown out of the bailer's hands when he attempted to empty it over the side, and usually most of the water blew back on board; but by watching for favourable moments the boys finally managed to get most of the water out.

"I am glad we've got some grub on board," Jack remarked. "It's lucky Dad thought of the possibility of getting separated from the schooner, and had those tins of what he called emergency rations put in the lockers. I don't know how you feel, but I am uncommonly hungry. You steer a few minutes, and I'll see if I can get hold of something."

Charlie took the wheel, and Jack crawled forward to the locker and brought out a large tin. From this he took some biscuits and a tin of meat, which he carried aft after carefully closing the box. The food tasted good to the boys, who had eaten

nothing since daybreak. It made them more cheerful and they talked over the prospects with greater hope. Late in the afternoon, while they were watching ahead in the hope of seeing land, they noticed the water breaking with particular force in two separate places. At first they feared it was rocks that caused the disturbance, when suddenly a jet of water shot into the air, to be blown away immediately.

"Whales!" the two boys exclaimed together.

"By Jove! so they are, and we are making straight for them. What on earth shall we do?" Charlie said.

"There's nothing to be done that I know. We can't steer to one side or we'll be swamped by the sea, and if we go ahead the whales will swamp us. Not much of a choice. We must simply chance the whales. They may move away before we reach there."

But the mighty beasts were apparently staying in one place and that was directly in their path. On went the crippled launch straight for the unavoidable danger. The boys looked at each other but said nothing. Each one thought that their end was near, but neither cared to say so. Nearer and nearer they approached, and then it was seen that the two whales were very slowly coming directly toward them and were about a hundred and fifty

yards apart. As the boat was heading she would pass between them, but what if they turned? That was the terrifying thought. There was nothing to do but sit quiet and await the results. As they got to within about fifty yards of the one on the right, it apparently saw the boat and headed for it, to the utter consternation of the unhappy boys, but still they spoke never a word, but stared as though fascinated by the great gray giant. Another twenty seconds and they had passed it, not ten yards away. The swish of the water from the whale's side struck the boat amidship and splashed aboard.

"Well," said Jack, in a tone of infinite relief, "that's the closest shave I have ever seen. I certainly thought it was all up with us, didn't you? Why, you are positively white."

"I wish you could see yourself. Just look at your hands and knees; you look as if you had the ague. But I say, did you ever see such a sight as those big brutes? I feel as though I had been dead and had just come to life again. Whew! We don't want any more excitement of that kind, thank you."

"I wonder what they would have done if we had really bumped into them?" Jack asked.

"You can go back and try if you like, but please leave me here. I'm quite willing to watch you do

the bumping. I don't think you'd repeat it. Do you know, when I saw that creature coming so beastly close, I thought of all the pictures I had ever seen of whales chucking boats up in the air and the men falling out."

"That's funny," Jack replied, "for I had exactly the same thoughts. Well, we ought to take this experience as an omen of good luck. Having missed being killed this time, perhaps we are doomed to live on. Won't Dad be interested to hear of it?"

"Rather, and so will Evie. But I wonder where your Dad is, and if he has managed to land the tuna. I expect, however, he'll have had his hands full saving himself, let alone the fish, and he'll be frightfully worried about us. I don't think he ever noticed that the launch had gone wrong and wasn't following. He was only interested in that old fish."

Night came on, and with it there was no lessening of the wind. The sea got rather worse if anything and seemed more choppy, as though the wind had shifted. No stars were visible, for the sky was a mass of inky clouds flying across from one horizon to the other. It was a long, long night. The boys took turns at the wheel and at trying to snatch a little sleep. They bailed at each change of the watch.

At last, after what seemed an endless time, daylight appeared. A dark, murky day, made more disagreeable by frequent rain squalls which drove past and obscured the view.

During a slight lull about nine o'clock, a simple meal was eaten; later the wind was less steady. Severe gusts were followed by comparative calm spells, which gave the boys a chance to rest. About three o'clock land was seen to leeward. At first this caused great satisfaction, but when it was seen that it was a rough rocky coast on which the waves were breaking with relentless fury, satisfaction changed to dismay. To be washed ashore there meant almost certain death, and there appeared no chance of finding a cove into which they could steer the drifting boat.

For a few minutes they gazed ahead, wondering what they could do. Then Charlie suggested trying to anchor. It was a forlorn hope, but perhaps by doing so they could keep clear of the rocks until the wind died down. Anyhow, it was the only plan that suggested itself, and the boys got the small anchor ready with its rope cable and cast it overboard. For some time it did not touch bottom, owing to the depth of the water, but as they drew closer to the wave-beaten rocks it touched, but for a time did not hold. Only a little more than half the cable was out, as it seemed better to keep a re-

serve and pay out gradually in order to prevent too great a shock if the anchor got fast.

Suddenly, bump, bump, bump, it went over the rocky bottom until it struck something soft; then it held. The boys rushed to the bow in order that the stern might swing round, and paid out the cable until but fifteen feet remained. The boat, gradually checked in its speed, swung round head to wind, but in doing so shipped several waves.

"Let's get into the middle," Jack shouted to Charlie, but his voice was almost drowned in the fury of the gale. They both lay down so as to offer as little resistance as possible. Filled with dread, mixed with but scant hope, they watched the shore to see if they were still drifting. For a time the anchor dragged little by little and the boys began to lose hope, but at last it held and the launch pulled and jerked in vain.

The question now was how long the rope would stand the strain and how long the boat would hold together, for the pounding was frightful. Watching for a favourable opportunity they wrapped an old jersey round the rope to prevent it fraying as it chafed against the gunwale and then they devoted their energies to bailing. This was most necessary, as the water kept splashing in at an alarming rate. If they could only have started the engine, it might have been possible

to keep it going very slowly ahead and so take the strain off the rope, but nothing they could do had any effect on it, and after a long time they gave up the attempt.

In the gathering darkness, the sound of the raging gale whistling and shrieking around them, the pounding of the boat, and the roaring of the waves as they spent their fury on the weather-beaten rocks, was terrifying beyond belief, but there was nothing they could do. Nothing but quietly await the end which they felt was bound to come before long.

More and more water was coming into the boat. Evidently the seams were opening, and, in spite of the ceaseless bailing, the water gained slowly but surely. At length it was over their feet. The weight of it going backward and forward increased the strain on the rope, and suddenly with a dull crash it parted. As a nervous horse might bolt from its halter, that boat reared and, swinging round, darted toward the seething shore-line.

Hope dies hard, and the boys still hoped that they might be driven into a sheltered cove. They sat aft and steered, but the boat was heavy with water, and she lunged this way and that, scarcely paying any attention to the rudder. Closer and closer they drifted to the rocks. Only a few minutes at most remained before the smash would

come. In the darkness the foam of the churned waters shone with a cold, ghostly phosphorescent glow, which danced up and down the rocks. Another minute went and still another, and then the boat was lifted on a huge, white-capped, roaring wave and cast with a crashing, shivering blow on to the shore.

CHAPTER VII

THEY FIND THEMSELVES ALONE IN A STRANGE LAND
A CAMP IS MADE AND THEY MAKE THEIR FIRST
FIRE BY RUBBING STICKS

DAWN was breaking. Dark, sooty clouds were drifting rapidly over the pale green-blue sky. A wind still blew, but with ever-decreasing force, a tired wind that had done its worst and was content to die. Among the rocks the sea danced and threw up glistening spray into the little pools of bubbling foam. Between the rocks there were splinters of white wood, parts of what a few hours before had been a proud, buoyant launch. Other wreckage lay strewn along a tiny stone-paved beach.

Gradually the sooty clouds passed, a yellow sun climbed over the horizon and its warm rays tinged the country with gold. It was the morning after the storm. This part of the world had been bad-tempered, but it was sorry now and would try to make amends. Whatever damage had been done must be forgotten. The past has gone, only the present and the future should be considered, for they represented life.

The sunlight crept down the hillside until it came to a shapeless figure curled up at the foot of a dwarf spruce. It warmed the figure, and the figure moved. One hand was raised and drawn across a blood-stained, swollen face. The eyes opened and blinked in the bright light. A look of extreme surprise came into the face; it moved again, as though to see if movement were possible. Then the body was raised a little, and finally Charlie Mason sat up and gazed about as though afraid to believe his own senses.

He was alive, that seemed certain; but where was he? and what had happened? Then the hollow growling of the waves as they passed in and out among the rocks brought back the past. He remembered the launch and the horrible gale, and the breaking waves and the—— But here his memory failed. Yes, he must have been wrecked and cast up here, or had he been conscious and crawled to this shelter which was but a few feet from some great wreaths of foam? Where was Jack? and at the memory of his friend, he got up—tried to jump up but was too stiff—and looked about. Oh, dear, how it hurt to walk; every bone and muscle in his body ached with a dull, stupefying pain. As he continued his efforts he felt easier, his limbs responded better to his will, and he walked with greater ease.

Where should he look for Jack? On shore or in the cold green water, and he shuddered at the thought of what he might find if he looked over the edge of the rocks. But Charlie was by nature hopeful, and he refused to think that his chum might be dead. If one had been saved, why not both? For, after all, they had been sitting close together when the crash came and the same wave might easily have thrown both of them ashore. Walking slowly and painfully, he peered behind each rock, into each hollow, and among the scrubby spruces, but beyond the wreckage, which was strewn everywhere and which failed to interest him, he saw nothing of his friend; and he began to fear that the worst had happened.

As he continued his search, he noticed a large, rounded rock at the lower side of the small beach; behind it was a dark shadow, as though there were a hole or cave in the bank. He limped over to see what it was, and to his infinite relief and delight saw a pair of feet projecting from the shadow. But the feet were absolutely motionless, and his delight of the moment gave way to an awful dread lest perhaps it was only a dead body he had found.

Quickly he clambered over the rock, regardless of his own pain, to where Jack lay pale and still, so terribly still. On the side of his head there was a blood-covered gash, which accentuated the pallor

of the face. Charlie knelt down and felt the hands. They were cold, and his own fingers trembled so much that he could not be sure whether the pulse was beating. Then he placed his hand over the heart. Was it imagination? or was it really beating? He tore open the clothes and put his ear against the chest. The skin was distinctly warm, and yes, he was sure he could hear the heart throbbing.

His friend was alive, that seemed certain, and he quickly picked him up and carried him out of the dark, cold shadow up on the bank where the sun was shining. The warmth, he thought, would be the best thing and he began to rub the cold hands. He then took off the boots and chafed the still colder feet until a slight glow suffused them. For a long time he continued this treatment, and then came the reward. The body moved, and soon Jack's eyes opened. At first they seemed to see nothing and closed again. Colour was beginning to tinge his face and Charlie rubbed harder than ever. Once more the tired eyes opened. They stared at Charlie, who said:

"Come on, Jack, old chap, wake up. You're not dead, you know. We're safe on shore, thank goodness."

By way of answer, Jack slowly stretched himself, and looking hard at Charlie, said: "By Jove, I

thought it was all a dream; but what has happened to me? I feel as sore as if I had been well beaten; and where are we? and where's the launch?"

"Here, sit up and take a look around, and you'll know as much as I do," and he helped Jack to sit up. "Now where do you think we are? Blessed if I have the least idea, but I expect it's either Labrador or Newfoundland. I don't think it's Cape Breton, and that's about the only other place we could have hit. As to the launch, she'd make good firewood, and that's all. Speaking of a fire, let's light one," and he put his hands in his wet pockets. "Guess again. We've no matches."

"Well, I'll be hanged"; and Jack smiled as he said it. "No matches, apparently nothing to eat, and no one knows where we are. Looks as if we would have to get up and get a move on if we don't want to die in this place."

"That's it. Now I'll pull you up and perhaps you can shake the stiffness out of your joints." With that he helped Jack to his feet.

"Great Cæsar, how my head does ache! Someone must have hit me," and he drew his hand across his blood-covered forehead. "Makes me feel rather wobbly," and he sat down again.

Charlie then went down to the sea and soaked his already-wet handkerchief in the cold salt

water and bathed Jack's head. When the blood was washed away, it was found that the cut was not a serious one. The cold water revived him greatly, and Jack got up and was soon able to walk unaided.

"Now look here, Jack, the first thing we've got to do is to look for something to eat, for I feel as though my backbone was getting entangled with my ribs. It must be many years since we last had any food."

"That's just how I feel, and I begin to wonder whether we have been here lying unconscious for several days, or whether it was really only last night that we landed on this kind and hospitable shore. Let's see if by chance any grub has washed up from the launch."

They examined the rocks and beach very carefully, and found many things belonging to the launch, including a tuna rod with its tip broken, an oar, a bundle consisting of a pair of rubber boots, an old oilskin, and a sweater. These they threw up on the bank to dry. The reserve rations which they knew had been on board could not be found. The question was, where could they have gone? Suddenly an idea came to Charlie.

"Look here, Jack, we evidently landed here somewhere near high tide. Otherwise you would certainly have been drowned, for you were just

about the edge of the high-water mark, and that was, I should think, about ten o'clock last night. It is now about nine or ten." Here he unconsciously pulled out his watch. "Hang it all, the beastly thing has stopped. Must have forgotten to wind it up last night."

"You careless chap," laughed Jack. "The idea of forgetting such an important thing when you were about to come to a strange land. Now we shall never have the right time."

Both boys opened their watches, and of course found they were filled with water.

"Well, go on, Mr. Wise Man, and let's have the rest of your remarks."

Charlie continued: "As I said, it's now about nine or ten, so the tide is probably still rising. When it goes down we shall find most of what is left of the launch, and I expect the reserve rations will be deposited somewhere among the rocks. In the meantime, let us go off and search for some berries, which will have to do until we can get something better, and at the same time we can have a look round and see what is back of us."

"Right you are, but go easy on the walking, for I feel very stiff in the joints."

The country back of the shore was mostly rough scrub, with occasional open barrens and patches of thick woods. Farther back the land rose toward

a long ridge of rough-looking mountains. On investigation the barrens were found to contain a great many bake apples, which were most welcome, and the boys made a meal of them—not very satisfying it is true, but better than nothing.

Jack found walking a difficult job, and suggested returning to the shore. Charlie accompanied him, and then set off along the coast to see what was below. For a mile or more there was no break in the line of low, rocky cliffs. But a little farther along there appeared to be a shallow bog, from which an irregular, thickly wooded valley ran inland. So he continued on his way and at last came to the bay which proved to be the mouth of a fair-sized river along the heavily timbered banks of which was some beautiful camping ground. This was most satisfactory, and Charlie returned with the good news to Jack, who was lying fast asleep. It seemed almost a pity to disturb him, but there was a great deal to be done and they must make the most of their time, for the tide was rapidly falling. Accordingly, he awakened the sleeper, who stretched and yawned and got up feeling all the better for the rest. The search among the rocks was amply rewarded, for they found the tins of reserve rations hidden in a deep cleft and the contents were none the worse, as the friction tops had kept the water out. The

food if used with great care would be sufficient to last about eight days if they had nothing else, and during that time if they saw no chance of being rescued, they could prepare for a long stay, if such proved necessary. After eating a few biscuits and a piece of chocolate, the boys continued their search and found the engine of the launch in a shallow pool.

"I don't suppose it's of any use to us, but we might as well save it," said Charlie, and between them they got it up on the bank clear of the high tide.

The petrol tank, sadly battered about, was also found. Beyond these things there was little to be picked up, except the woodwork of the boat, every bit of which was carefully piled up in case it should be needed. As Jack remarked, there was not much with which to start housekeeping, but each had his "crooked knife" as well as a pocket knife, so they had much to be thankful for. In the immediate vicinity of the wreck there was no birch, nor any fresh water except in the bog holes, so it was decided to move over to the river where they could be more comfortable.

"The first thing to do is to make a bark shelter so that we shall be able to keep dry in case of rain, and near the river there are any number of fine big birches. So let's be off," said Charlie.

They started immediately, carrying their small food supply, the tuna rod, and the bundle of clothes. The walk, though less than two miles, seemed very long for they were tired and extremely sore. The afternoon was getting along when they arrived, so there was not much time to waste.

After a careful examination of the ground, they found a delightful place for their camp. It was on a high bank overlooking the river, high enough to be safe from any danger of floods, for they noticed that the line of the ice-scarred trunks of the trees, which marked the early spring floods, was fully five feet below them. Between two large, smooth-barked birches they started the lean-to. In the woods they found poplar saplings which were small enough to be easily cut with their "crooked knives," and with them the framework was quickly made. Then great slabs of bark were peeled and laid on the frame, and covered with heavier pieces of wood to prevent their blowing off.

It was only a rough structure, but for the time being it would serve their needs.

Now came the question of a fire. They had no matches and no flint and steel. Both had read about making fires by rubbing sticks as described in one of Ernest Thompson Seton's books,* but it

* "Book of Woodcraft."

was too late to undertake any experiments in that line, and so after eating a couple of biscuits from their slender store, they lay down on a bed of boughs wrapped in their torn oilskins and were soon fast asleep.

Not until the sun had been up several hours did the boys wake. They were very stiff but greatly refreshed and exceedingly hungry. A good wash was the first thing; then came the question of breakfast, and at Charlie's very practical suggestion they went off in search of berries. After an hour's hunt, they found both wild raspberries and bake apples in abundance. These were collected in a bark pail and carried back to camp, where with some more of their precious biscuits they made a good meal. As soon as this was finished Charlie suggested that some definite plan of action must be made.

"You see," he said, as he sat on a large moss-covered log, "we don't know where we are, which means we don't know which way to go to get out. All of which means we must stay here for awhile, at any rate. There's a chance that your father may come in search of us, as Captain Blunt would have some idea which way we should drift. Now if they cruised along here, the only way we could signal to them would be by smoke, which means a fire. Then if we are to stay

here any length of time we must eat, and all we shall find will be fish and meat, both of which must be cooked, so it looks to me as if the very best thing for us to do is to get a fire started. We have no matches and no flint and no gunpowder, so it seems as if the only way left is stick rubbing. Neither of us has ever tried it, but I think I remember reading how it is done and we might as well have a try."

"It will take some time, I'll bet," said Jack, picking up a stick and absent mindedly whittling one end of it to a fine point, "if I remember right you have to have just the right sort of wood. Do you know what it is?"

"No, Jack, I don't," Charlie replied, trying hard to recall what he had read on the subject, "but I think juniper" (the Newfoundland name for *Tamarack*) "or fir, or even cedar will do, but we need first of all a stone for the drill socket. So let us look for one along the side of the river."

It was some time before a stone was found with a smooth depression which was deep enough to hold the drill. Then a bow was cut. This was about two feet long. From Charlie's pocket various sorts of string were produced and a good, strong piece selected for the bow-string. Now all that was needed was a piece of flat wood with a niche cut in it and some

punk and shavings, and last but not least a suitable drill. With no axe they had some trouble in getting the flat piece for the fire board, but at last they found where a balsam had been split, apparently by lightning; the tree had fallen, leaving long flat splinters. These were perfectly dry and seemed suitable. For drills they got several different woods in the hope of having one that would answer. Punk was easily found, and for shavings they took birch bark, shredded and rubbed up fine. Bringing all their material to the camp, they collected plenty of birch bark and dry firewood and then settled down to try their skill. It was quite evident that the dry bow-string would soon fray, so they soaked it in water and then began operations. For some time there was no result. The drill revolved well enough, but no fire came. After twenty minutes of vigorous work they were getting discouraged, when a slight smoke arose from the fire board and then a spark or rather a tiny coal formed.

"Oh, Charlie, it's coming, it's coming!" Jack cried. "Rub harder."

But Charlie was over-anxious and he leaned too heavily on the drill, it broke at the critical moment. Another piece was quickly substituted and once more the drill began to spin, and at the end of a few minutes the smell of smoke was fol-

lowed by a distinct though small column of smoke. Jack blew for all he was worth, while Charlie rubbed harder and harder. The fine burning powder dropped onto a wooden chip below on which had been placed some punk and fragments of a mouse's nest, which the boys had found and which they knew to be excellent tinder.

The spark thus obtained went out, unfortunately, before it ignited the tinder. Then Charlie hit on the idea of blowing gently the ember until it broke into a tiny blaze which was applied quickly to the pile of fuel consisting of bark and small twigs, and soon a good fire was blazing to the intense delight of the boys. In order to avoid having to repeat the operation, which was decidedly hard work, they got a lot of punk and made a hole in the ground into which they put it when thoroughly alight. This, covered over with moss, would keep smouldering for a long time and be useful in case the fire itself went out.

"Now what shall we do next?" Jack asked with his usual desire to make use of every possible excuse to indulge in his Nimrod propensities. "Catch some fish or kill a rabbit, so that we shall have something to cook?"

"Let us see what we have in these old pockets," Charlie replied, for he had hopes of finding a few disused flies.

All pockets were then turned inside out, and a strange collection of things came to light. An old fishing coat always has surprises in it, and now the boys found several dilapidated salmon flies, both small and large, and a card of cheap mixed trout flies which had been bought at a country store. Jack laughed when he pulled it out.

“Do you remember the day we got this, Charlie, up there at Little Creek? We had not a single coachman left and that was the only fly the trout were taking, so we went into the little general store, but they would only sell us these cards of ‘one dozen assorted.’ We turned up our noses at the rotten things then, but little we knew how handy they would prove. There are eleven flies left, for we only used the coachman.”

Then there were bits of line and old leaders, swivels, split shot, and a couple of worm hooks. Rubbishy as it was, it represented untold riches now, for it in all probability meant food. A couple of thin rods were very soon cut. To each of these a short piece of line and a fly were attached, and the boys went down to the mouth of the river in the hope of finding some sea trout. With the utmost care they fished, for the fear of losing their tackle was great.

Fortunately, sea trout are not fastidious, almost any tackle will do for them, and soon the boys

were busy trying to land some very lively fish. They had no landing nets and dared not risk lifting them out of the water, so as each one was hooked it was carefully steered to shore and beached in a sandy pool. In a couple of hours they caught fifteen nice trout, varying from half a pound to about a pound and a half. These were quickly cleaned and carried in triumph to the camp. Those to be eaten were split open and toasted on sticks, the others were buried in cold sphagnum moss, so that they would keep well.

Never were fish more thoroughly appreciated. Even the absence of salt was scarcely noticed, as the crisp brown flesh vanished. It was a meal to be remembered. Everyone who is fond of outdoor life enjoys the most primitive things; and certainly this meal was primitive, for the boys had made the fire as the oldest African savage made it, and the fish were cooked without utensils or condiments. The only thing the boys regretted was that they had caught the fish with artificial flies and silk line and they determined to remedy that as soon as possible. The fish must be shot with bow and arrow, they declared, then they would taste still better.

In their first desire that everything should be primitive, they little realized what lay before them and how they would be forced to fight for existence

without the aid of practically any of the resources of civilization. It would be strictly a combat of first principles.

On the chance of being seen by any passing vessel, it was decided to build a smoky fire on a prominent place near the coast, and with this idea in view they set out to prepare the fire, so that in the event of strong wind it would not spread. Near the mouth of the river on a rocky headland was found a place that would answer the purpose. Here they built a circular wall of stones, against which sheets of thin turf, pulled up from the rocks, were laid so that no wind could get through. The wall enclosed a circle about ten feet across and was nearly four feet high. Into this enclosure they brought some burning logs from their camp fire, and, piling these up with driftwood, soon had a roaring fire which within an hour became a bed of glowing embers. Over this, turf and moss and punk were piled, and soon a column of dense blue smoke rose skyward.

By any one searching the coast it could easily have been seen several miles away, for inland was the dark forest as a background.

After gathering a supply of material with which to replenish the fire, the castaways left it and returned to the camp. The lean-to required attention and needed some more work to make it com-

fortable in case of severe rains, and better beds had to be made. Not having waterproof ground sheets, they cut large slabs of birch bark and placed them over the spongy moss, and on this flooring a deep layer of boughs formed a splendid bed. The next thing was to gather a good supply of firewood, because the nights were cold and they had no bedding except their oilskins and sweaters and the one sweater which had been washed ashore. These, of course, were most welcome, but still a fire outside the lean-to was necessary, and as they had no axe all the fuel they collected had to be either drift or fallen timber. Having completed these various tasks the boys decided to go out for a supply of berries, for these and fish were to form their chief food.

“What a pity we cannot preserve these bake apples,” said Jack, as they gathered the bright yellow berries into the bark pails. “They will soon be past, and they are jolly good. I don’t suppose they would keep under water, as Andrew said the blueberries would. They are much too soft.”

“Look here,” Charlie answered, “I have an idea. Do you remember on the launch we had several tins of petrol. Now if we could find those and clean them out thoroughly, why couldn’t we fill them with bake apples, cook them in the tins,

and close them up tight while they were still boiling, just as Aunt Mary does with her preserves. I am sure they would keep. Let us go back tomorrow to the wreck and see if we cannot find those tins. They must be somewhere about."

"By Jove, that's a jolly good idea of yours, Mr. Wise Man. We'll start immediately after breakfast, and now I think we've got enough for a couple of meals, so let's get back and cook a fish or two, for I am beastly hungry."

Therefore, the wanderers returned to camp and made a good meal of roasted trout. Not having any dishes to wash, they turned in as soon as they had finished the meal and slept soundly till morning.

CHAPTER VIII

THEY SHOOT A HARE AND SOME SALMON WITH BOWS
AND ARROWS, AND LEARN TO LIVE OFF
THE COUNTRY

WHILE they were cooking their breakfast, Jack suggested that a little salt would be a great addition to the fresh fish. The air was so damp there did not seem much chance of finding any on the rocks, so he proposed that they find a stone with a slight hollow in it. By putting this near the fire it would become warm enough to evaporate salt water and so furnish them with salt. The idea seemed an excellent one, and Charlie added:

“We can make the filling of the stone basin automatic. All we have to do is to make a birch-bark bag which will leak very slowly. This filled with salt water can be hung over the stone and kept full all the time. I’m sure it will work. We will do that this afternoon. It looks as though we shall have plenty to do in this place, if we want to keep alive and be fairly comfortable.”

“You bet,” replied Jack, “but I call it great fun, don’t you, a sort of Robinson Crusoe duet.

I wonder how long we shall be here? It's all well enough at this time of year, but when the winter comes, it's going to be frightfully cold, and we shall have all we can do to keep from freezing and starving."

"Don't worry; if we are still here we'll manage in some way or other to keep going. What I dread are the long evenings with nothing to do and no lamps. We'll certainly have to build a good solid house if we expect to be able to stand it. However, don't let us worry about things too far ahead. This is only August and the cold doesn't really begin till well into November. Incidentally, that reminds me that we should keep track of the days, or we shall not know when we came or anything. A tally stick will do for now, with a notch cut for each day. In the meantime, let's be off."

It was a glorious fresh August morning. The country was looking its very best. The dew on the grass sparkled like crystals in the early sunlight. It was a positive joy to be living on such a day, and the boys romped along the sea front as happy as larks, entirely forgetful of the terrible anxiety of those who were searching for them in vain.

On arriving at the scene of the wreck, the boys found the tide very low. This gave them a

good opportunity to hunt for the missing petrol tins. For a long time they found no sign of them, and were about to give up the search in despair, when Jack caught sight of something bright in the water a short distance from shore. What it was he could not make out, so he undressed and waded in. The water was bitterly cold, but fortunately it was shallow. The object proved to be one of the tins, and he brought it out with great triumph and returned to continue his search, which resulted in discovering two more of the much-desired tins. All were full of petrol and, of course, none the worse for being in the water.

The delight of both boys was unbounded. But the question was what to do with the petrol. So far as they could see, there would be no use for it, while the empty tins would be most useful. With great reluctance they were emptied and carried back to camp. The supply of fish being rather low, it was decided to spend the afternoon trying to catch more, and arranging the salt-water evaporator. Then they could devote the next day to picking berries.

The fish were not rising when the boys tried, so after spending an hour and having no luck, they gave up the attempt and went in search of a suitable stone for the salt experiment. At length one

was found which was fairly flat on one side and slightly hollow on the other. This, after being well scrubbed with sand, was carried to camp and arranged on a couple of other stones, so that it stood over the fire.

The next thing was to make a large bark bucket, and this proved far more difficult than they expected, as the bark broke when bent too sharply.

"Let's soak it and then steam it," Charlie suggested.

This was done and the result was thoroughly satisfactory. In a very short time a bucket was made which was very nearly water-tight. In fact, it leaked only just enough to answer the purpose for which it was intended. Cord of any kind being very precious, the bucket was fastened together with strips of "withe-rod" (a viburnum having very tough, pliable wood which the boys had seen used when they were last in Newfoundland) and fastened to a forked stake, so that it hung over the stone. As this got hot the water evaporated almost as fast as it fell, and the boys waited anxiously to see the salt deposited. This would mean a matter of many hours, so they returned to the fishing. They found the trout rising well and succeeded in getting a good catch during the remainder of the afternoon.

In the meantime, the smoke fire had been kept

going in order that the blue column should continue its mute appeal for help.

Next morning, the boys got up early and were delighted to see a white incrustation on the salt-gathering stone. They scraped off a little and rubbed it on the fish and found it a very great improvement. Having eaten breakfast, they refilled the water bucket, tended the camp and smoke fires, and then started off for berries, carrying with them two of the petrol tins which had been carefully cleaned. The whole morning was spent in filling them with bake apples. These were carried back to camp, and after a little water had been added to prevent burning, they were put on the fire. As the berries cooked they settled in the tins, so more were added in order that the tins might be kept quite full. At the end of an hour the fruit seemed properly done. The tins were taken off the fire and the tops firmly screwed on.

When this was finished, it was decided that a stone fireplace must be built on which the cooking could be done more conveniently, so they collected stones from the river and made a most elaborate one. Into this they raked a lot of hot embers and piled it up with wood, and having done so they went off to look for some material with which to make themselves bows and arrows; armed with such weapons, they thought, it would be

fairly easy to shoot salmon. That would not only be great sport but it would give them food which would be a welcome change from trout. Both boys had belonged to an archery club and were fairly good shots, so they did not anticipate much difficulty in hitting the fish.

After much searching they found some suitable wood, and with their crooked knives soon had the bows made. What they should use for strings was the question, when Charlie remembered the tuna rod with its reel full of fine strong line. That would do splendidly. It did not take long to string the bows, which, though rather crude and lacking in spring, would do for a beginning.

Arrows were the next things; these were made of willow, as the boys had no means of splitting either spruce or pine which they knew would be far better. The points of the arrows could be easily hardened in the fire, and as there were no feathers available it was hoped that at the short range the shooting would be done, the arrows would go straight enough.

"I don't think they use feathers for fish arrows," said Charlie. "Don't you remember those that Mr. Pratt brought back from Africa? They were made of very light wood, a sort of cane, I think, with the weight near the point."

With this idea they trimmed the arrows, leaving the thickest wood five inches from the point. By the time the equipment was finished the sun had set and they returned to camp.

On arriving at the lean-to they were about to place the unfinished arrows under shelter when a terrific explosion rent the air. It was as though a bomb had dropped; burning sticks and fragments of stones were hurled about and the air was filled with ashes, so that for a few minutes the boys could see nothing. Then the smell of something burning attracted Jack's attention to where a lighted stick had set fire to the birch bark roof of the lean-to. Another minute and the whole structure would have been ablaze. Acting without a moment's hesitation Jack tore the strip of bark away and threw it aside.

"What in the world can have happened?" said Jack as they arrived, rubbing the ashes from his smarting eyes.

All about the fireplace it certainly looked as though a shell had exploded; ashes and pieces of wood thrown about in confusion, and the fireplace itself was entirely wrecked. Large flakes of stone had even been thrown into the lean-to far beyond. Charlie looked about in absolute bewilderment, then suddenly he said:

"I know. It's the stones that burst as soon as

they got hot. We ought to have thought of that and let them heat very slowly. You see, we got them out of the river and they were water-soaked, and when they got suddenly hot the steam formed inside and they just burst. Old John told me about this once and said that we had to be very careful what stones to use, and Mr. Pratt explained why they burst. I ought to have thought of this sooner."

"Jolly lucky it didn't happen while we were cooking," replied Jack. "We might easily have been killed. Well, we've had one more narrow escape. Looks as if we were born to be hanged as they don't seem to be able to kill us in any other way. In the meantime, we ought to be learning something."

"Incidentally, I may add it was fortunate we were here, otherwise a big fire might have been started and we would have lost our few belongings," Charlie remarked as he searched for any sparks that might yet cause trouble.

A fresh fire was made up and soon the evening meal of trout was cooked and well seasoned with salt, for the salt stone had not been injured. The fish and some berries constituted dinner.

"What worries me is that we have nothing to take the place of bread, and I feel sure this everlasting fish and berries, even with the addition

of meat if we can get it, will make us ill," said Jack.

"It is a question," Charlie replied, "and I have been thinking about it a good deal. Of course, the fruit takes the place of vegetables, but I expect some starchy food is necessary if we are to keep well for any length of time. What do you say to trying the spatterdock roots? You know, Andrew said they were eaten. Then there's the caribou moss. We might have a go at that. It didn't sound nice the way it was described to us, but it's worth trying. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, and I'll tell you something else. Don't you remember that fellow at the museum telling us that some of the Indians made bread out of acorns, and that you could also make a drink with them which was rather like coffee?"

"Yes, Jack, but where are the acorns? I don't remember noticing any oak trees, do you?"

"No, now I come to think of it, I don't. Still, we might have a look to-morrow, and if we find some it would be great fun to see if we can do anything with the acorns."

"Right you are. We'll have a good search. In the meantime, bed for me. Good-night."

"Good-night. Dream of the salmon you are going to shoot to-morrow, for that's to be our first job."

When morning came, it was raining and blowing hard, so the salmon shooting had to be postponed, and a walk through the woods in search of oak trees was substituted. Some more berries were needed, too. The boys carried their bows and arrows, carefully protected from the rain, under their oilskins. As they walked they examined the trees very carefully. Birches and conifers of several sorts were most abundant, and here and there were thick patches of poplars, whose restless leaves rattled incessantly in the breeze. Mountain ash with its brilliant orange berries was conspicuous in some places, so also was the "wild pear" (as the Newfoundlander calls the Service berry). After walking some distance, they came to a ridge on which were a great many maples. These gave the boys an idea for the spring when, if they were still there, they could get some maple syrup, which would be a great treat. Among the maples they found two oaks, but the acorns were not fully developed, so they left them, noting carefully where they were.

While walking through the woods, the boys saw something moving among the underbrush. They both drew out their bows and got ready to shoot, then crept forward very quietly. After a few minutes a large hare appeared about twenty feet away, and each took aim and fired. The hare

seemed surprised as the arrows struck the ground close to where he was sitting, and he raised himself to get a better view of the strange creatures who were hurriedly trying to get fresh arrows into position. Once more they fired, with the same results, and still the animal watched them in an interested sort of way. Again two arrows flew through the air, and this time one went true, striking the hare directly in the chest and killing him instantly.

Whose arrow it was they could not tell, both wanted to claim it, and they decided there and then that each one must have a distinguishing mark so that in future they would know their own arrows.

They picked up the hare, which was a fine big one, and their five badly-aimed arrows, and turned back to camp, very much pleased with the results of the morning's work. The meat would prove a most welcome change after the many meals of trout.

Toward noon the rain ceased and the wind began to die down. The afternoon promised to be fine, and it was decided to have a try for the salmon later when it became calmer. Until then the time was well occupied in collecting fuel, a task that always occasioned a keen wish for an axe.

"If we only had one, we'd be quite happy," said Jack.

"Yes," Charlie replied, "it would be fine; and think what a fine house we could build. But has it occurred to you that, once winter starts, the fallen trees and driftwood will be entirely buried in snow, and we shall not be able to find anything except what branches we can break off?"

"No, I had not thought of that. By Jove! it means some work to gather enough to keep us warm for—let's see, how many months?—from November or December until well into April, I suppose. About six months. Do you suppose we can ever do it? If only we had the axe it would give us such splendid exercise cutting wood during the cold weather. But there's no use in crying about it. We haven't got one, so we shall have to go without and do the best we can, and be jolly economical with our supply."

"It would not be a bad idea," Charlie replied, "to cut a lot of birch bark before it gets too hard to peel. We can stack it up and put heavy stones on the pile to keep the bark from curling. Each day we wait it will get more and more difficult to peel. So, whenever we come to a good smooth tree let's get what we can from it, and so gradually make a big pile, for it's bound to come in handy, if we are stuck here all winter. And what about the spatterdock roots? I thought we were going to get them. There are sure to be some in the

pools near where we get the bake apples. We really should have a try to-morrow."

All this time they had been bringing in wood. The wind had completely died, and Jack suggested that they had better see what they could do with the salmon. Both were very anxious to try their skill, and they started off in great excitement armed with bows and eight arrows apiece. They followed the river for some distance before finding a pool which would suit them, but at last they came to one which lay under a high overhanging rock. After some difficulty they climbed to the top of this rock and, looking down into the dark, oily pool, were delighted to see no less than seven salmon almost directly beneath them. The fish were nearly stationary and rather far below the surface. Occasionally one would rise slightly until it came quite close to the top.

For a few minutes the boys watched the shadowy forms without making any movements that might frighten the fish. They got their weapons ready, and as soon as one came near enough to the surface they both shot. Apparently the two arrows were aimed true, and struck the water directly in line with the fish, but as the shots were fired at a slight angle, the water had deflected the arrows and both passed harmlessly over its back.

"Next time, let's fire a little below them," said

Charlie, and again the young sportsmen watched for an opportunity.

For a very long time the fish remained far down in the gloomy depths of the pool, and the boys grew tired and discouraged. Fully half an hour they waited before a salmon rose slowly until its fin cut the surface of the slow-moving water. Then at a given signal two shots were fired almost simultaneously. What happened the boys could scarcely see. There was a terrific splash, and the water was churned into foam. The fish had been struck by both arrows, but the backbone had not been touched. Backward and forward from one end of the pool to the other the stricken fish thrashed, but the arrows were quickly doing their work and the fish was losing its power.

“Charlie, you rush down and get him if he comes within reach, while I stay up here and keep a look-out for him”; and Charlie quickly slid down the steep rock and rushed to the lower edge of the pool, so that he could catch the salmon if it drifted down stream. This, however, it did not seem inclined to do. It sank, instead, where the water was about four feet deep.

“You keep your eye on him, Jack, while I get a stick to pull him out with,” Charlie called out. Then he cut a long sapling and returning to the

pool, he tried in vain to get the fish, but it only slid out into deeper water each time he touched it.

“Cut a small, sharp-pointed forked stick and tie it to the pole so as to make a sort of gaff,” Jack cried.

The idea was a good one, and Charlie immediately acted on it with the result that after three or four ineffectual attempts he dragged the fish to shore, and a beauty it was, fully eighteen pounds. The boys’ delight knew no bounds.

“Why, it’s almost as good as proper fishing,” said Jack.

“You bet it is. I don’t think I was ever so excited as when we saw that we had actually struck the beast. I call it grand sport. We’ll have to smoke this chap so as to keep it for a rainy day. It’s getting late now, so we had better get along back.”

After cleaning their catch, they trudged to camp, each taking his turn in carrying the heavy fish. As it was too late to make a smoke-house that night, they rubbed a little salt into the fish and covered it carefully in moss. Then having had some food they both turned in, thoroughly happy and satisfied with the results of the day’s sport: a hare and a salmon, that meant enough food for at least two or three days. Evidently there was no immediate fear of starvation.

In the morning, they were up before sunrise and off to the pool where several fine fish were waiting for them. As the boys peeped over the edge of the rock, the fish went down deep and remained there for some time, but when the sun struck the water, they all rose slowly, until there were four close to the surface. Each boy selected one and both fired together.

Jack missed his, but Charlie's arrow went true and struck the fish fairly in the back, evidently hitting the spine, for the fish scarcely wriggled but slowly drifted down with the current, sinking as it went. Not wishing to disturb the other salmon, Charlie quietly got down from the rock and went to the extreme lower end of the pool and waited there for the fish to reach him. It seemed a long wait, and just as it came to the shallow water where he could get hold of it, he heard the whizz of an arrow, followed immediately by a splashing of water.

"I've got him!" shouted Jack; but he had not.

The arrow had evidently struck the fish, and with the first struggle it had broken loose and the fish escaped, while the arrow drifted down to where Charlie stood holding his catch. He picked up the floating arrow and found that the point had broken off short.

"Hard luck, old chap," he cried to Jack; "but never mind. Better luck next time."

Then after laying his fish, which weighed about ten pounds, on the bank, he returned to the rock. The pool had been badly disturbed, and it was more than an hour before another chance offered. This time only one fish came within range, so they both fired together. An arrow hit, but did not immediately kill the fish, which dived and stayed down for some time. Then gradually it rose and swam about as though it had great difficulty in keeping down, so both boys seized the first opportunity and fired again. This time the salmon was instantly killed, both arrows having gone through it. The young hunters were more than delighted with their success and quickly secured their quarry, which proved to be about the same size as the one they had killed the previous day. There seemed very little chance of further sport in that pool for a long time to come, so the boys decided to go back to camp with what they had and make a proper smoke-house. This took them till noon, when they had the pleasure of hanging up two and a half fish in a dense smoke, which would preserve the flesh against the time when it might be needed; the other half fish was cooked and eaten with the greatest possible relish.

“This afternoon I vote we get some more berries and a couple of spatterdock roots to try, and this evening if there is time we’ll have another try at

the salmon. We might also make a few more arrows if we have time," Charlie said.

"And a proper gaff," Jack added.

"Why, wouldn't a snare be better?" asked Charlie, "if we only had some wire."

"But we haven't any, except that heavy wire there on the tuna line, and that would be too stiff, I expect."

"What about the batteries from the launch?" Charlie said, with sudden inspiration. "The wire on the coils would do even if it is rather thin. We could twist two or three pieces together; and speaking of snares, why couldn't we make some rabbit snares at the same time? We could catch plenty, I am sure, especially as the weather gets colder."

The suggestion was a brilliant one, and they decided to go the following day to "Wreck Point," as they called the place where they had landed. They then went to the barrens, and as soon as sufficient berries had been picked they tried for the spatterdock roots; but getting them was no easy matter. The bog pools were so soft that they did not dare get into them. Finally, after many attempts they devised a scheme which worked well. A long pole with a forked end was secured. The points of the forks were left about six inches long, and to these they lashed short,

strong, V-shaped pieces with the points toward the handle, like two barbs. With this contrivance they grappled the sunken roots and with little difficulty brought them ashore. Two roots were enough for a trial, and these with the berries were carried back to camp.

As it was still fairly early, the boys could not resist having another try for salmon, but though they waited on the rock till almost dark, they saw only one fish, a very large one, which kept deep down in the pool. This was rather discouraging, and they wondered if their salmon hunting in this pool was at an end. If so they must find either another pool or a different method of catching the fish.

When they returned to camp it was practically dark, and they felt too tired to try cooking the roots, so they made a meal of berries and a piece of broiled salmon.

"To-morrow we'll try the hare and the roots. It would be rather fun to bake the hare in clay as the Indians do, but I haven't noticed any clay about here, have you, Jack?"

"Not a bit, but then I haven't been looking for it. I expect we'll find some in the river. Now I come to think of it, the bottom of that pool where we caught the salmon was very sticky. Perhaps that's clay; if so, there must be some more about."

“We should get some, for I am sure the hare will be jolly dry if we roast him, as we have no grease of any kind.”

“All right, we’ll have a look to-morrow. Good-night.”

CHAPTER IX

THEY FIND THE TUNA, DO EXPERIMENTAL COOKING,
FIND EDIBLE ROOTS—GET A DUCKING—SHOOT
A LARGE SALMON—TAKE A TRIP INLAND—
SHOOT A STAG AND SOME PTARMIGAN

THIS is the seventh day since we arrived wherever we are," said Charlie as he awoke and looked at the tally stick. "Seven days and no one has come near enough to see our smoke signal."

"Oh, well, never mind," Jack replied, "what's the good of worrying? We are very comfortable and we are both enjoying it thoroughly. We can't do more than keep our signal going and make preparations for a continued stay in our unknown land. You may be sure that we'll get away some day. By the way, it has just struck me that we have nothing for breakfast except some berries; not a piece of fish, as we must not touch the smoked salmon. Don't you think we had better try to catch a few trout?"

"Not a bad idea, and the tide is about right. Come along."

The mouth of the river was only a little more

than a quarter of a mile from the camp, so they were soon at their regular place. The fish rose well and a dozen nice ones were caught in less than half an hour. While they were cleaning them, Jack happened to look along the coast.

"What's that?" he cried, pointing to a dark object lying on the shore about three hundred yards away.

"Hanged if I know. It looks like a dead body, Jack. Let's go to it and see."

Leaving the catch of fish in a place of safety, they ran along the beach; as they drew near the object looked more like a large seal.

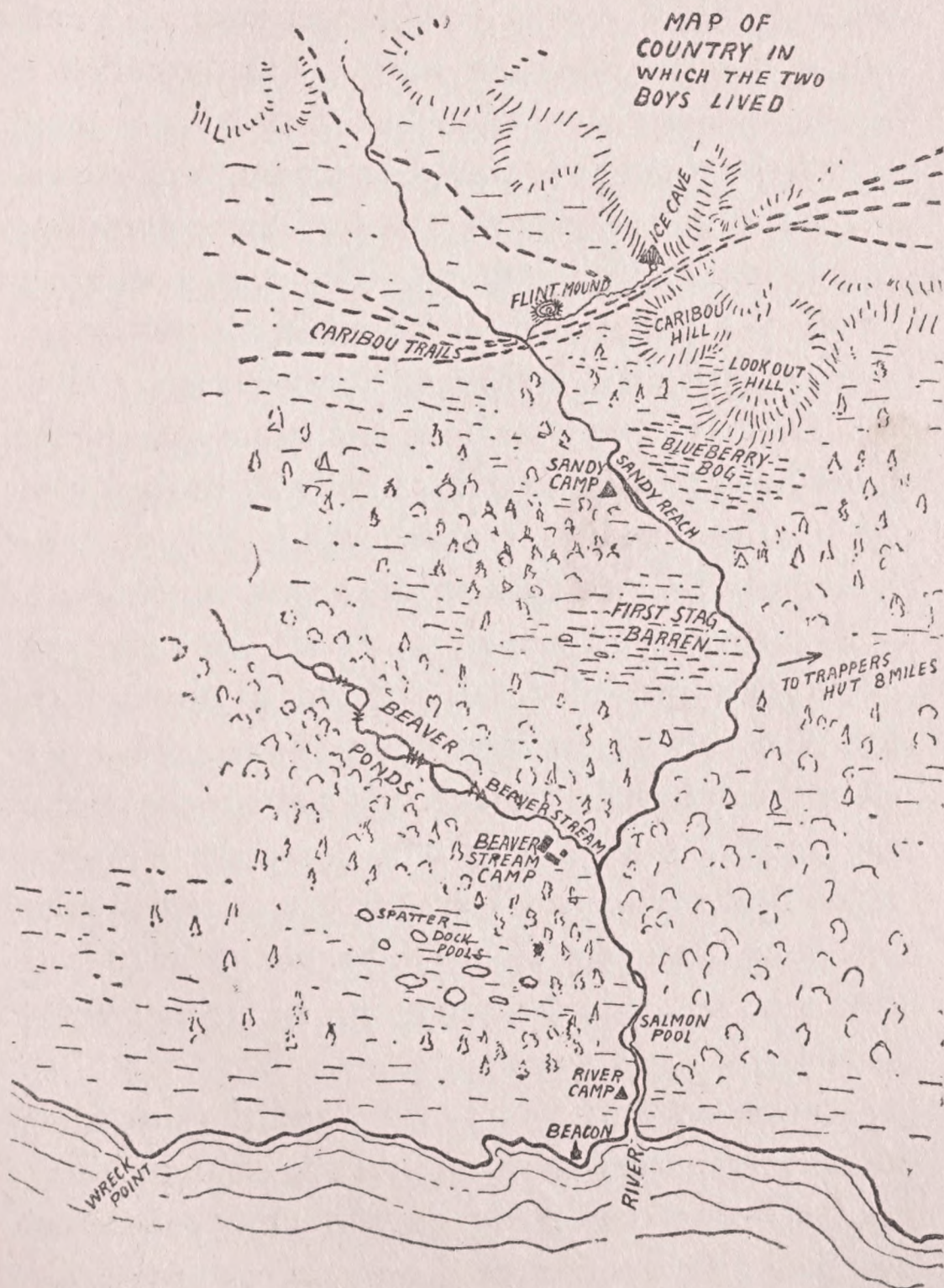
"Why, it's a tuna I do believe," Charlie said. And so it was. A large dead tuna.

"Look here, quick, Charlie, it's the one Dad caught as sure as you're alive. There's the hook still in its mouth and the trace with a piece of the line."

"Well, did you ever hear of such an extraordinary thing in all your life. To think that it should have washed ashore, at our very feet, you might say. It doesn't seem possible. But what do you suppose killed it? I don't see any mark of the lance. Wait a minute, though, what's this?—a bullet mark, I believe. Certainly looks like one. Yes, it is. It went in here, and there's the larger hole where it came out."

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MAP OF
COUNTRY IN
WHICH THE TWO
BOYS LIVED



"You're right, that's just what it is. You remember when we discussed the problem of landing the fish if it was very large: Dad said they might use the lance, or harpoon as he called it, if the weather was calm, but if there was much sea on, he thought it would be safest to shoot and make sure that the beast was dead before attempting to do anything more. The water was certainly not particularly calm when this chap was caught, so I expect they tried to shoot it. Evidently they missed the head and spine and the fish must have put up a terrific fight and broken loose before they could get another shot in. It must have been jolly ticklish work in that small boat!"

"I believe you are right, Jack. But the shot eventually proved fatal. Then I suppose the fish went down for a few days and has drifted here since it came to the surface. It's about the strangest thing I've ever heard of. I wonder if we can make any use of it. I expect the meat is pretty far gone, but the skin might be useful. Let's skin it. The tide is coming up, so we had better hustle up."

The knives were soon at work and the skin taken off in long strips until one side was bare. That was all they could do as the creature, which weighed about a thousand pounds, was too heavy for the two boys to turn over.

"Let's get along back with what we have," said Charlie. "The chances are it will not drift far and we can come down next tide and get some more. Perhaps it will be good enough to turn over for us, or I'll tell you what we can do, anchor it to these rocks with a strip of its own skin, and stick a few stones into the side we have skinned, so that the extra weight will make the body turn over the way we want it."

"That's a jolly good idea of yours, Charlie, and it won't take a minute."

In a very short time the task was completed and the boys, laden down with the slippery skin, returned to camp, picking up the trout as they passed. The long wait had given them very keen appetites so that the trout tasted even better than usual. Immediately after breakfast the fires were attended to and they started off for "Wreck Point." On their way they had a splendid opportunity to get two hares, but unfortunately they had been foolish enough to forget the bows and arrows. The truth was that they were so excited over the finding of the tuna that they could think of nothing else. It brought back to them with great keenness the thought of how much worry their absence must be causing. Jack, with his usual rather happy-go-lucky nature, was impressed chiefly with the strangeness of the coinci-

dence that had brought to them the tuna which his father had killed and which incidentally had been the cause of their present predicament; while Charlie was affected more particularly by the thought of what the Sylvesters must have suffered through their sudden and unexplained disappearance. With his marked affection for his foster parents and his devotion to Evelyn he hated to think of the misery of which they were the innocent cause. In his mind he pictured the meeting when Mr. Sylvester had returned to his wife alone, and the picture was terribly painful—so painful that he found it hard to speak freely of it even to Jack. Never before had he realized how fond he was of the Sylvesters and now the chances were that he and Jack had been given up for dead. The thought depressed the two for some time; but youth, healthy and well fed, does not give way to the blues, and by the time they reached the Point their spirits were up again.

The batteries from the launch were soon discovered and the wire taken off. Some nails were also drawn from the wreckage as they might prove of great use. Then the boys returned to camp. As soon as they had made a snare and attached it to a suitable long, light pole, they went to the salmon pool on the chance of getting some more fish. On leaning over the edge of the projecting rock they

were delighted to see three fish lying quite near the surface. Two shots were fired with great care and Jack got his with a clean shot. After a very short struggle, the fish turned over and sank as it drifted slowly down stream.

The wire snare proved a great success, and the salmon was quickly caught and pulled ashore. That ended the salmon shooting for the time, as the pool had been disturbed. Before returning to camp the boys examined the river bottom and found that, in places, there was some fine clay, so they collected enough to make a proper covering for the hare and took it with them. The salmon was added to those already in the smoke-house and then they debated on what was the proper method of baking the hare. As Jack was about to skin the animal, Charlie said, "I'm sure the skin should be left on, for I remember reading somewhere that when the clay is opened the skin comes off with the clay and the meat is clear of it all."

"All right, we'll try it your way and if it's spoilt you've got to go out and stay away till you get another hare."

The clay was rolled out into a sheet about an inch and a half thick and the hare, after having been cleaned and salted, was put on this and rolled up in a compact mass. Then a hole was made in

the bed of glowing embers and the hare carefully deposited and covered up with hot embers.

“Now, what about the roots. How shall we cook them? Shall we boil one and bake the other?” Jack asked.

“Yes, that sounds sensible. We can boil one in the bailing tin that we brought from the wreck, and roast the other between some stones, make a sort of small oven.”

This was accordingly done and the boys watched eagerly, wondering what would be the results of their experimental cooking. If the roots proved a success, it would mean a great help in the food question, as they could be gathered in quantity and stored either under water or in the ground so that they would last all winter. How long to cook either the hare or the roots was entirely a matter of guess. It is true the roots could be tried occasionally, but the hare must be done before the clay was opened. After about an hour and a half or two hours, the roots seemed cooked and were found to be quite eatable though somewhat flavourless. The boiled one was rather glutinous and not so good as the baked root.

“Once we get used to them they do very well,” said Jack.

“Especially in a stew,” Charlie added, “for really they are not at all bad. Much better than

I expected from what old Andrew told us. Perhaps we'll find the caribou moss will also be good enough to eat. We must try some soon. Now what do you say to trying the hare? I'm awfully hungry, aren't you?"

"Hungry, my dear chap, I'm always hungry in this place. I could eat six meals a day without a murmur. Come on, we'll attack the fatted calf."

The ashes were brushed aside and the cracked clay casing was very carefully removed from its bed of embers. As they got it clear of the fire the clay fell apart, and disclosed the hare cooked to a turn and smelling so delicious that the boys lost no time in sampling it.

"Well, I say, Charlie old boy, if this isn't the best that ever happened, and these roots are just the thing with it. It's a dinner fit for a king, isn't it?"

"Oh, shut up, don't waste your time talking. Just eat and thank our good luck that we have such a meal. We must make a raid on the hares. I'll bet there won't be many left in this district if we stay here long. Gosh, but this is good. Here, pass me another chunk of that roast root before you gobble it all up."

During the afternoon they collected some more of the spatterdock roots and picked a lot of bake apples and raspberries. They also got another

salmon, and then as the tide was low again they went down the beach to see the tuna. It was still there and had turned over so that now the unskinned side was uppermost. The boys were delighted to find that their scheme for turning the huge fish had succeeded and they lost no time in removing the remainder of the skin. This was taken ashore and dried in strips, stretched flat, by hanging it to branches and fastening heavy stones to the ends. By the time this had been done the gloom of twilight had settled on the land and the boys were tired enough with the long day's work to enjoy thoroughly their evening meal and still more their simple but comfortable sweet-scented beds.

The following day was devoted to salmon shooting and getting firewood in case a spell of bad weather set in. The results were highly satisfactory; no less than four fish were shot, one of them weighing about twenty pounds. The boys realized that the run of fish must be nearly ended and that, once they passed this part of the river, they would probably not be able to get any more unless they had the good luck to find the spawning beds, so every effort must be devoted to getting as many as possible while they had the chance. For three days more their time was therefore devoted to this to the exclusion of almost

everything else. They were fortunate enough to find another fairly good pool where the salmon lay within reach of their arrows.

By hard work they managed to get altogether eleven more fish and had a very amusing experience with the last one. Jack saw a very large salmon lying close under the "Watch Rock," as they called the large overhanging rock in the first pool. He became very much excited and, while trying to take aim, leaned over a little too far and just as he fired the arrow he lost his balance and fell splash into the deep pool almost on top of the big fish he had shot.

Charlie laughed so much he could scarcely offer any help, but as Jack came floundering out of the pool, soaked to the skin, he suddenly realized that the fish was drifting down stream splashing about in a frantic manner. It was a prize worth getting at any cost so he rushed into the pool at the lower end with the snare, but the stones were slippery and his feet slid from under him and he sat down in about two and a half feet of water with a resounding thud. Nothing could possibly have suited Jack better. It was his turn to laugh now and he did so while Charlie floundered about trying to get a foothold. In the meantime, the fish had made its way out of the pool and was fast following the stream, heading for the sea.

The two boys raced after it. Twice they got in front of it, but failed to get a hold, but at last they succeeded in forcing it into a shallow back-water and in a few minutes had it safely ashore. The weight they judged was about twenty-eight pounds. As the sun was within half an hour of setting, they had to hurry back to camp with their fish and build a large fire in order to get their clothes dry. It was not far from midnight before they were able to turn in, both resolving that, under the existing conditions, water sports were not at all in order.

Next day saw a complete change in the weather. The wind blew in fitful gusts, rain came down in torrents. All day it continued and the boys were scarcely able to leave the shelter of the camp. For two more days it continued with little intermission. It was dreary work sitting in the small lean-to for so many hours, but they amused themselves with various tasks. A number of wire snares for hares were made. Then they needed new arrows, some of them were made with plain burnt points and four for special occasions had nails for points; these were first sharpened on a stone and then let into a notch and bound with very thin pieces of tuna skin. A few feathers had been picked up at various times and were now used to feather the best of the arrows.

New bow-strings were made of tuna skin, as those made from the line were not very satisfactory, they frayed too quickly. The tuna skin came in handy for quivers, too. In order to make these they cut a wooden form, then after thoroughly soaking the skin, laid it on the form and sewed the edges together with thin strips of the same skin. When this dried it shrank so much that they had to wet it once more in order to get the form out. However, in the end the results were quite satisfactory and they both felt very proud of their new equipment. As Jack said:

“All we want now are moccasins and eagle feathers and we shall be full-fledged Indians.”

On the evening of the third day of rain, while they were sitting watching the fire, Charlie said:

“As soon as this rotten weather stops, what do you say to taking a good long trip inland to see what there is up there. We won't be able to shoot salmon for some time after this rain, so it would be a good chance. We can take with us a piece of smoked salmon and perhaps a few of our biscuits. We haven't touched the two tins yet and there's quite a little left in the opened one.”

“It seems a very good idea and we might perhaps see something that will help us to know where we are, or how to get away.”

“I don't think there's much doubt, Jack, as

to where we are. Somewhere in the north of Newfoundland I'd be willing to bet. But how to get out of it, that's quite another pair of boots. Travelling in this country is no child's play, and if we did get lost it might go hard with us. Of course if we see something that looks like human habitation we'll be all right, but it doesn't seem to me as though there was a human being anywhere near us. Anyhow it will be interesting to make, say, a two- or a three-day trip up country."

"We'll have to be awful careful not to lose our way back to this camp," said Jack.

"Rather! if we did anything so terrible we should lose all our wordly goods except what we are carrying on our handsome persons. You know, of course, how many vanloads of valuables we have in our palace," laughed Charlie.

"It's all very well to laugh, but the little we have is jolly well worth keeping. Look at all that fine smoked fish. We'll bless that yet, I expect. Shall we start to-morrow?"

"Yes, if it's reasonably fine, we might as well," Charlie replied.

"I wonder what time it is; bedtime, I should say."

When morning came the storm had passed. The sky was gathering together all the smoky

little clouds that had been part of the bad weather and was taking them all over to the rising sun to be melted. The wind was coming from the northwest, cool and crisp, with a very decided tinge of autumn in it. A perfect morning to start on a long tramp and the boys got ready immediately after breakfast. Armed with bows and arrows, fire-lighting apparatus, and three days' supply of food in case they did not shoot anything, they left the camp, and followed the course of the river.

For several miles this took them through woods of varying density, the ground for the greater part being covered with rocks hidden beneath the richest of green and gray mosses. On the trees, too, were mosses of many kinds, some clinging to the bark as though they were part of it, and others like an old man's beard, hanging in festoons of cold gray. There was little sign of animal life in these woods, a few juncos and chickadees and several species of sparrows. Occasionally a woodpecker tapped at the trees to be sure he would not be passed unnoticed. Once in a while a Canada jay, soft and fluffy, would fly close to the boys and stare at them with its large dark eyes and quizzical expression. There were no squirrels and, as Charlie said, that made it pretty certain they were in Newfoundland, for anywhere on the mainland the chattering

of the noisy red squirrels would have been almost incessant.

By keeping close to the river, the boys found the walking rough, but as they did not know when it might make a sharp bend, it was their safest course. Several small rapids and a low waterfall they had noticed, but the water was fairly easy running as the fall to the sea was evidently gradual. They crossed one fair-sized stream which emptied into the river less than four miles from camp—this was the only tributary they found.

At the end of about five miles the country became more open, large tracts of barrens came almost to the water's edge to be separated only by a narrow fringe of trees. In places the river passed through level ground, so that it spread out into ponds of considerable size and the flow of the current could be seen. While crossing these open barrens the boys were delighted to see several caribou feeding.

"How about trying to stalk them?" said Jack, "we might manage to kill one with our arrows and it would be great sport."

"Right you are, but we will have to get very close to have any chance of getting one. These metal-pointed arrows would go in, I expect. It's worth trying, anyhow, and a supply of fresh

meat would be most welcome. Which shall we try for? There's a doe and a fawn over there, but the ground is so open that I doubt if we could get near enough."

"The fawn would certainly be the best eating, but as there is no cover I think we had better go for that young stag that you see feeding among the trees. We can get well down wind and stalk him if we are careful, Charlie."

So they decided on the stag and worked round till the wind was right and then by keeping well among the low trees, managed to approach without difficulty to within about seventy yards. The stag was in an open space, so they could not get any nearer for the present, and it seemed as though he would never go into cover. At last, however, after nearly an hour of patient waiting, they saw him move into a fairly thick place and the boys followed as carefully as possible. Nearer and nearer they crept, their primitive weapons ready and their hearts thumping violently. The stag was entirely unsuspecting and was feeding here and there on the moss with which the ground was so thickly covered. Several times they were within ten or fifteen yards, but there was always something between them and their quarry. A clear shot was absolutely necessary, for the smallest twig would throw the arrow off its course. At last

the moment came. There was an opening between the trees and into this, not more than nine yards away, the stag walked, feeding as he went. With trembling hands both boys raised their bows and took careful aim.

"Ready," whispered Jack. "Fire!" And the two nail-pointed arrows flew. Both struck and entered and the stag gave a frightened jump, then stood still a moment with his head held high and he caught sight of the boys who were quickly reloading, but before they could fire he rushed off, crashing through the trees, the boys following as fast as they could. After going perhaps a hundred yards they had the great satisfaction of finding the animal lying dead. The shots had been well-aimed, one having gone into the heart. Never had the boys known such intense delight. This was real sport, altogether different from shooting with long-range rifles, when the animal has no chance. Not only was their sporting instinct satisfied, but their successful shots had provided them with a large supply of meat as well as the skin which would be of great value.

"It's evidently a last-year stag," Charlie said, after they had mutually congratulated each other. "See his funny little velvet-covered horns. Now what shall we do? It seems to me the best thing would be to get the meat back to camp as soon as

possible and start smoking it, otherwise it will not keep I'm afraid."

"You're quite right," Jack replied. "As soon as we have finished we can make another start for an inland trip. Wouldn't Dad be surprised if he could see what we have done?"

"You bet he would. Now the question is: Shall we skin the animal or just cut him in halves, skin and all?"

"Oh, skin him first, so that we shall not injure it by cutting. The whole skin will make a good ground sheet for our bed."

It took longer than they expected to get the skin off, but finally it was done and then after cleaning the carcass they divided it in two. But this made each load rather more than they could carry, even without the skin, so the head and neck and the shanks were cut off; this lightened the loads considerably, and by changing about frequently, as the hindquarters were far the heavier, they managed to carry all the important part of their prize.

The journey back to camp seemed very long, and when they finally arrived they were thoroughly tired. A piece of nicely broiled steak soon restored them and before night they had most of the meat cut into strips and hung in the smoke-house. A little was kept to be used fresh,

for as Jack observed, they deserved that for a treat.

The following morning they started inland tempted by the fineness of the weather, stopping on their way to examine the caribou skin. It was decided that this should be properly stretched so that it would dry flat. To do this they laced the sides to a couple of poles and then placed two more diagonally across from the corners, so the skin was stretched as tight as a drum. It was then hung high enough up on a tree to be safe from foxes or other prowlers.

As it was nearly noon by the time they had completed the work they had lunch before proceeding on their way. Jack remembered having been told that caribou marrow was extremely good eating, so he suggested roasting the shanks which had been cut off the previous day. A fire was made and the bones roasted and the hot marrow found to be delicious. This and some heated-over steak completed the meal after which they resumed their way inland.

In a general way they followed the river, leaving it now and then to examine some particular piece of country. A few caribou were seen and several hares, one of which they shot. Beyond that they saw very little game. Toward evening they reached a part of the river where the bottom

was of pure white sand, while below it was mostly mud and stones. At the time the boys did not pay much attention to this change, for they little realized what it would mean to them later. Camp was made near this sandy reach, a simple camp composed of a bark lean-to and a roaring fire, for the night promised to be cold. Half the hare was roasted for supper and the rest kept for breakfast.

Very early in the morning they were up, and after a wash in the sparkling water, followed by breakfast, they started. The river was very narrow, little more indeed than a stream, so they left it and headed up to the hills from where they were looking forward anxiously to an extended view of the country. On the lower hills, the boys were delighted to find enormous quantities of blueberries, far more than they had found in any other place. Evidently it had not been many years since the ground had been burnt over. This fact heartened the boys, for it showed that the region was probably not unvisited by man. Another thing that delighted them was the number of ptarmigan; covey after covey ran in front of them, some quite young birds, others fully grown, and all so tame that they had no difficulty in shooting seven. The shooting was expensive work, however, for, owing to the stony nature of the ground, they broke no less than six arrows.

"Boomerangs would be the thing for them," Charlie suggested. "I wonder if we couldn't make one. Those that Mr. Pratt had looked easy enough to make. Let's try it some day. A piece of good, heavy juniper would do, I'm sure."

"Yes, but wouldn't it be jolly hard to cut with only these knives, and I never could manage to throw one so that it would either hit anything or come back. You used to be quite a dab at it, though, weren't you?"

"I could make them come back without any trouble," Charlie replied, "but I never hit anything except my own head, and Mr. Pratt when he stood near me. With practice, however, I expect we could hit these idiotic birds."

CHAPTER X

THEY FIND CARIBOU ROADS—A NATURAL ICE HOUSE—AN INDIAN FLINT PILE—RETURN TO RIVER CAMP—MAKE PLANS FOR THE WINTER—DISCOVER BEAVER PONDS AND DAMS AND DECIDE TO MAKE USE OF THE BEAVER'S WOOD-CUTTING—SELECT SITE FOR THEIR WINTER HUT, AND COLLECT MATERIAL FOR BUILDING

TOWARD mid-day the young explorers reached the summit of the hills, from which they could see the country for many miles around. Looking toward their camp they observed a series of small ponds not far from the river, and on their side. Charlie noticed it and said:

“You remember the rough little stream we passed, about an hour and a half after leaving camp yesterday, that must evidently come from those pools. We'll have to investigate them and see what's there.”

“Wouldn't it be fine if we find beaver? Those ponds certainly look as though they were separated by dams, don't they?”

“That's just what I was thinking of, Jack, and beaver might be very useful to us.”

Looking farther northward, they noticed a number of trails, which led toward the hills back of where they were standing.

"What do you suppose they are, Charlie?" Jack asked.

"I don't know, but they look like narrow roads; let's cut in a bit and see what they are."

"Wouldn't it be funny if we found a road up here in this wild place?" Jack said, as they started.

"Not much chance of that, considering there isn't a sign of a human habitation as far as we can see."

Half a mile from the first peak they came to the "roads"—for roads or paths they certainly were—some only three feet wide and others as much as ten feet. They were cut deep into the ground, and even the rocks were worn down several inches as though by much traffic.

"Do you know what they are, Charlie?" Jack asked.

"No, I cannot imagine."

"They're caribou leads, I'll bet anything. The roads that Steve told us about, which are used by the caribou during their migrations."

"By Jove! you're right; that's what they must be. What a sight it must be to see these great herds coming along in the late autumn. That will be our chance to get meat. We could hide here quite close to the roads and use our arrows without any trouble and, as it will be cold then, the meat can be kept. We may get enough to last

all the winter if we have luck. We must make some stronger bows and plenty of arrows. Those nails we got from the launch will come in handy for points. I only wish we had more of them."

The boys, very cheerful at the prospect, followed the roads along for some distance to get an idea of where they could best find a place to watch when the migration began.

As they were going down a narrow gully they noticed a small stream of icy cold water and decided to stay there and have lunch. A small fire was made after some trouble, for they were not yet expert with the primitive stick-rubbing device, and a couple of ptarmigan were plucked and roasted.

"Those wing feathers will be fine for our arrows, let's keep them," said Charlie, as he picked the last morsel of juicy meat from the bird.

On drinking the water from the tiny stream, they were struck by its extraordinary coldness and decided to find its source. They discovered that it flowed from a hole in the shady side of the gully. The hole was really a sort of cave and fully eight feet high; inside it was intensely cold. This surprised them at first, but on going farther in they found that it was almost solid ice, evidently packed there by centuries of bitter winters.

"Let's get out of this before we become refrigerated meat," Jack said, shivering.

"That's an idea," Charlie replied as they got out into the warmer air. "Why can't we store our meat here, where it will keep perfectly? We can use this as a sort of reserve; pity it's so far from the camp. But I'll tell you what we can do. If we kill any caribou near here, we can store the meat in this ice box until the cold weather starts, and then bring it down when the migration has finished, if it isn't too mild."

It seemed best to follow the gully down to the stream so that they might find the easiest way. It would shorten the road and save going up that rough hill. On their way they got five more ptarmigan. But this time they used stones instead of arrows. The absurd tameness of the birds made it quite an easy matter, and it saved the arrows.

Shortly before reaching the stream they came to a curious mound not far from what seemed the main caribou road. The mound did not appear to be a natural formation, it was too even and quite unlike anything in the vicinity. On close examination it was found to be a heap of all shapes and sizes of flint fragments, many of which were like irregularly shaped arrow heads.

"I say, here is a stroke of luck, this is evidently an old Indian flint pile," said Charlie. "And we shall be able to find lots of arrow heads which,

though not perfect enough for the old masters of archery, will be quite good enough for us."

"You bet; why, just look at this one," Jack answered as he held out a very fair piece which he had picked up. "That's certainly good enough for me."

"We'll camp just below, near that little birch wood, and spend a few hours here, Jack."

The weather looked threatening so they made their lean-to and bed and got enough firewood for the night, in case it should rain, and then returned to the place where, perhaps hundreds of years ago, the Beothuc Indian had made his arrow heads.

It was strange that these boys, products of the age of highly developed weapons and advanced civilization, should be depending on the skill of ancient savages for an improvement in the means for killing their food.

Before night they had collected several dozen more or less perfect arrow heads and so they had enough to get along with, but after talking things over during supper, they came to the conclusion that they had better get a few more, so that, if bad weather confined them to camp, they could occupy themselves with arrow making; then, when the migration of caribou began, their supply would be sufficient, and they would not have to worry if their arrows were lost or broken.

The following morning, therefore, as soon as they had finished breakfast, they returned to the flint pile, and collected enough to satisfy their needs. When this was done they left for the home camp, picking up the partly dried caribou hide on the way.

It was almost like getting home again, returning to camp; River Camp they had christened it.

They were tired after the trip inland, but before resting, many things had to be done. The smoke-house fire needed material, the beacon and camp fires had gone out altogether and had to be rebuilt from embers taken from the smoke-house, which by good luck had not quite died out. Unfortunately rain began to fall before the various tasks were finished, but at last they were able to get under shelter of the cook house, which was simply a roof of bark to keep them dry while working near the fire.

Their supper consisted of roast roots and ptarmigan with a few blueberries to finish up with; and a rattling good meal it made.

While sitting in the lean-to, watching the fire, plans were made for the next day; if the weather should be fine they decided to pay a visit to the series of pools they had seen from the hills, otherwise arrow making would pass the time.

The boys were very anxious to try the flint heads

and while discussing how they should be fastened on, Charlie exclaimed:

"What a pair of idiots we have been, we never even thought of getting any sinews from the caribou and they would have been just the thing. How was it neither of us thought of this at the time?"

"To tell the truth, Charlie, I think we were too excited to think about anything but the obvious necessity of saving the meat and hide. Remember that it was the first time either of us had killed big game, so there was some excuse for us."

"I suppose so, but nevertheless it's a pity we were such fools. The next caribou we get must make up for it, and the sooner we get one the better; not only can we use the sinews but the intestines I believe will do as well, if not better. Do you suppose there would be any good going to where we shot the stag? It's worth a try and it will mean only a very little extra distance to walk when we go to the ponds."

"Very good," Jack replied, "we'll do it; and there is another thing we should think about before long, and that is getting a good supply of blueberries, they are ripening now, and we ought to pick them while they are nice and firm as I'm sure they will have a better chance of keeping under water. We might also try drying some. I don't

know whether they will keep like currants, if they did it would be a great help, for to tell the truth the nearly all-meat diet that we are threatened with for the long winter will, to say the least of it, be very monotonous."

"Don't forget the spatterdock roots, we'll need a lot of them."

"I have been thinking of them and wondering whether they could be dried and parched brown very slowly before the fire, so that we could pound them up and make a sort of porridge or even bread. I vote we try it."

"Now, we have got to make careful plans, as it certainly seems as though our chances of being rescued are jolly slim, so that all our arrangements must be made for a winter campaign."

"There's not the slightest doubt of that, Charlie. Let's see, where's the tally stick? How many days have we been here?"

Charlie took the stick and counted the notches. "Eighteen," he said.

"Well, we landed about the first of August, I believe, so to-day is the 18th. About the middle of October we shall have ice, but I imagine it will not be thick enough to bother us until November, so we can count on about two months before the winter weather begins to make the work hard. And during these two months what have we got to

do?—build a proper house, shoot enough caribou to keep us going for at least six months, also get some hares and ptarmigan which can be put in cold storage. Now what else is there? Oh! Blueberries to be gathered and plenty of them, too, and spatterdock roots. That's all I can think of."

"What about the most important item—fuel?" asked Charlie. "Getting enough of that will be our biggest job, and then we shall have to make snow-shoes, otherwise we won't be able to get about at all, once the snow comes to stay. We ought to make a couple of light sleds if we can, in order to carry our meat and anything else. It's beastly hard work carrying loads on snow-shoes, I believe. The supply of arrows also must be made, so altogether we shall have our time well occupied; and the days are getting shorter, which means less working hours, as we can do nothing by fire-light. The whole question is: What shall we do first?"

"I think, Charlie, we should visit those ponds to-morrow and get the caribou gut if possible, and then set about building our winter house."

"I agree with you. Shall we build it here or look for a better place? This seems rather too exposed for a winter home. Farther in the woods, so that we could have the protection of the firs and spruces, would be far better. Why couldn't we look for a place to-morrow?"

"Certainly, and there's just one thing more before we go to sleep," Jack said. "I think we could live on here for some time to come so that we could keep the beacon fire going, and if any one did happen to come near, we might see them."

Charlie thoroughly agreed with this, and they turned over and were almost immediately asleep.

The following morning was dull and gloomy, but as the rain had stopped, the two boys started off for the ponds as soon as they had eaten breakfast and made up the fires. In a little more than an hour they came to the tributary stream and followed it along its winding way. They had gone about half a mile when Jack caught sight of a gleaming white stick floating on the water. They managed to secure it without much difficulty, and were delighted to find that it was very evidently a beaver cutting, for it was exactly like the piece they had found in the lake on their memorable fishing trip two years ago.

"I guess that settles the beaver question," said Jack.

"Not much doubt about it," Charlie agreed. "Come on, let's hurry up."

Half running and half walking, they made their way up stream. Several pieces of freshly cut wood were seen. At last they came to the object of their search, a real beaver dam about fifty feet

long and fully seven feet high. The boys could scarcely contain themselves when they saw this example of engineering skill, and their delight increased when they saw a hundred feet or more above that there was another and still larger dam.

"By Jove! but these must have taken the animals a long time to build. Just think of the amount of wood there is in each of these dams," Charlie said, as he walked over the larger structure, lost in admiration at the magnitude of the work.

He was even more pleased than Jack at finding this beavers' work; for many years he had been keenly interested in everything to do with these remarkable animals, and had read whatever he could find on the subject. Here at his very hand was the opportunity he had longed for of studying the habits of the beaver directly from nature. In his mind he planned to spend much time observing the animals. But there was much to be done during the few weeks that remained before winter, and, as will be seen, later on little opportunity was offered for the contemplated studies.

"I've got an idea, Charlie, a really brilliant one, too. Why can't we use this cut wood for fires and for building? Here it is already cut,

and we could easily float it down stream to wherever we are going to build our house."

"Good for you," Charlie replied with enthusiasm. "It will be rough on the beaver, but after all they can cut plenty more wood and rebuild the dams, and we certainly need this nice short wood. Lots of it is quite large enough for building purposes, and we can pick out the straightest pieces for that, while the crooked bits will do for firewood. Let us go on and see what there is above.

In the first pond, which was about three hundred yards long, they saw two large houses, or lodges as they are more usually called, built on little islands some distance from the shores of the pond. Near each of these there was a pile of dead brush protruding above the surface of the water. These were the remains of last year's food piles, though at the time, the boys did not know it. Along the shores were many blunt-pointed stumps of the trees which the beavers had cut, and many logs too large to be utilized by the industrious animals. Some of these might be rolled into the water and steered down stream and perhaps used for building material. The two very excited boys walked to the upper end of the pond, and, following the stream, soon found several more dams, all rather smaller than the first two. Above these was another pond with one very large lodge.

Above this again were three more ponds of gradually diminishing size, and below each were the dams which made them. Apparently each pond was inhabited, for they contained one or more lodges, all in fair condition, and the remains of several old and evidently disused lodges. Several hours were spent examining the colonies, but to the boys' disappointment no beaver were seen. It was too early in the day, and only on rare occasions do they come out earlier than an hour before sunset.

Remembering the need for sinew the boys had to leave the ponds and retrace their steps down the stream, and then turn off at the river and make their way to where the stag had been shot. Just before they reached the place, two caribou appeared on the barren, but, notwithstanding the most careful stalking, the presence of the hunters was discovered before they were within shooting range, and the animals returned to the thick woods and were not seen again. Foxes and birds, both jays and ravens, had been ahead of the boys and they found nothing left of the animal they had shot that could be used, so they decided to come back the following day and try to get another caribou.

While on their return to camp, the country was carefully examined with a view to finding a suitable site for the winter hut. After much search-

ing, they found a well-sheltered place protected on three sides by a thick belt of evergreens, while to the south it was fairly open. This spot was about a hundred yards from Beaver Stream, as it was decided to call the tributary stream. The ground was covered with mossy stones and sloped down to the water, and was high enough up to be safe from floods. The main river was only four hundred yards away. Altogether the boys were delighted with the situation, as it seemed to answer all their needs, including the easy transport of the beaver wood from the dams. Beaver Stream Camp was to be the name of their winter habitation, and they looked forward eagerly to the pleasure of building it. Plans were discussed all the rest of the way to camp, and they could scarcely wait for the time to come when the dams would be broken and the wood floated down stream for their use in building.

Both Charlie and Jack had seen pictures of trappers' huts, and they knew that in order to be easily warmed they must be small and low; an average height about six and a half feet, fourteen feet long inside and nine feet wide seemed to be about the right size. The chimney and fireplace must be made of stones and clay. How to make the walls was a difficult problem, considering the size of the available wood. A regular log

hut they could not make, as they had no axe; so, after much discussion, it was settled that a combination of timber, bark, and earth would be best, making the walls wide at the base and sloping toward the top, the framework, to be made of the largest wood they could get, stacked, as shown in the sketch of the house. Bark would be laid against the inner sides and the space filled with peat.

This would make a wind-proof wall that would be very warm. The roof would be of two thicknesses of bark with turf laid between. This meant that they would need a lot of birch bark, far more than they had collected, and more must be got immediately. The boys reached camp while discussing these plans, and after tending the fires they cooked their supper and turned in, to sleep to the accompaniment of rain and a rising wind, which developed to a regular gale before morning.

Notwithstanding the badness of the weather, the boys were up early and, after a quick breakfast, started to Beaver Creek in order to peel birch bark. It was getting late in the year for this task, and they experienced great difficulty in obtaining the large sheets that were needed. The best pieces were put on one side to be kept for roofing. All day they worked hard, and by night

had collected a very fair-sized pile, which, together with what they already had, would be enough for the new hut. It was late when they finally returned to camp, thoroughly wet and very tired but full of enthusiasm and hope. The steady rain would be of use to them, as the stream would be full enough to carry down the wood from the beaver dam, so they decided to take advantage of it and begin floating the supply down early next day. Accordingly, after a very early breakfast, they made straight for the dams. The stream was found to be very full, so no trouble was anticipated in getting the wood down. After looking over the situation, Charlie said:

“I think the best way will be for both of us to start loosening this second dam and get a lot of wood down to the first one. Then we can open that, and while one of us steers it through the opening, the other can go below and drag it ashore opposite the new camp.”

The idea seemed a good one, and soon they were hard at work. It was no easy task, either, for the logs and sticks were pretty well interwoven. Some of the material was so old and rotted that it would not float, but most of the larger pieces were fairly sound. After two hours of industrious labour the narrow pool formed between the two dams was well filled with floating wood, so the

lower dam was opened, but not without considerable difficulty. The boys were surprised to find how solidly the beaver do their work. It took nearly half an hour to make an opening of sufficient size. As soon as it was done, the wood was steered down the rushing water and started on its way. The boys drew lots for which should go down to receive it, with the result that Jack stayed behind and Charlie went. By going fast he reached the place selected for landing the wood before the advance guard arrived, and had time to cut a long, thin sapling with which to steer the wood ashore.

Soon it began to come, one piece after another, with alarming speed; so fast indeed that many a stick escaped, in spite of his tireless energy. After some time he decided to go a little farther down stream, to where there was a small pool or back eddy formed by a very large rock. Into this pool he steered the floating wood, taking it ashore only when an opportunity occurred. At the end of two hours Jack joined him, and between them they saved every piece that came along. The amount collected was most gratifying, and would prove sufficient for the present. The straightest and best pieces were hauled up to the camp site to be used for building, and the rest stacked up to dry for fuel.

Altogether the result of the day's work was most satisfactory to them, at least. How the beaver would like it was another question. By the time the work was finished, the afternoon was well passed and the boys were so tired that they could scarcely walk back to camp. Little time was lost in getting supper cooked, and it was followed immediately by bed and a good night of wholesome, well-earned sleep.

CHAPTER XI

THEY BUILD THEIR WINTER HOUSE ON BEAVER STREAM
—SEE A VESSEL WHICH DOES NOT SEE THEM—SHOOT
THEIR SECOND CARIBOU—FIND FRESH-WATER PEARLS
AND SHOOT A BIG BEAR

BEFORE beginning work on the hut, the boys went over to the barren (which they named First Stag Barren in honour of the animal they had killed there) in the hope of finding caribou. Very foolishly they approached from the windward side and they entered the open ground just in time to see two white tails disappearing in the opposite woods.

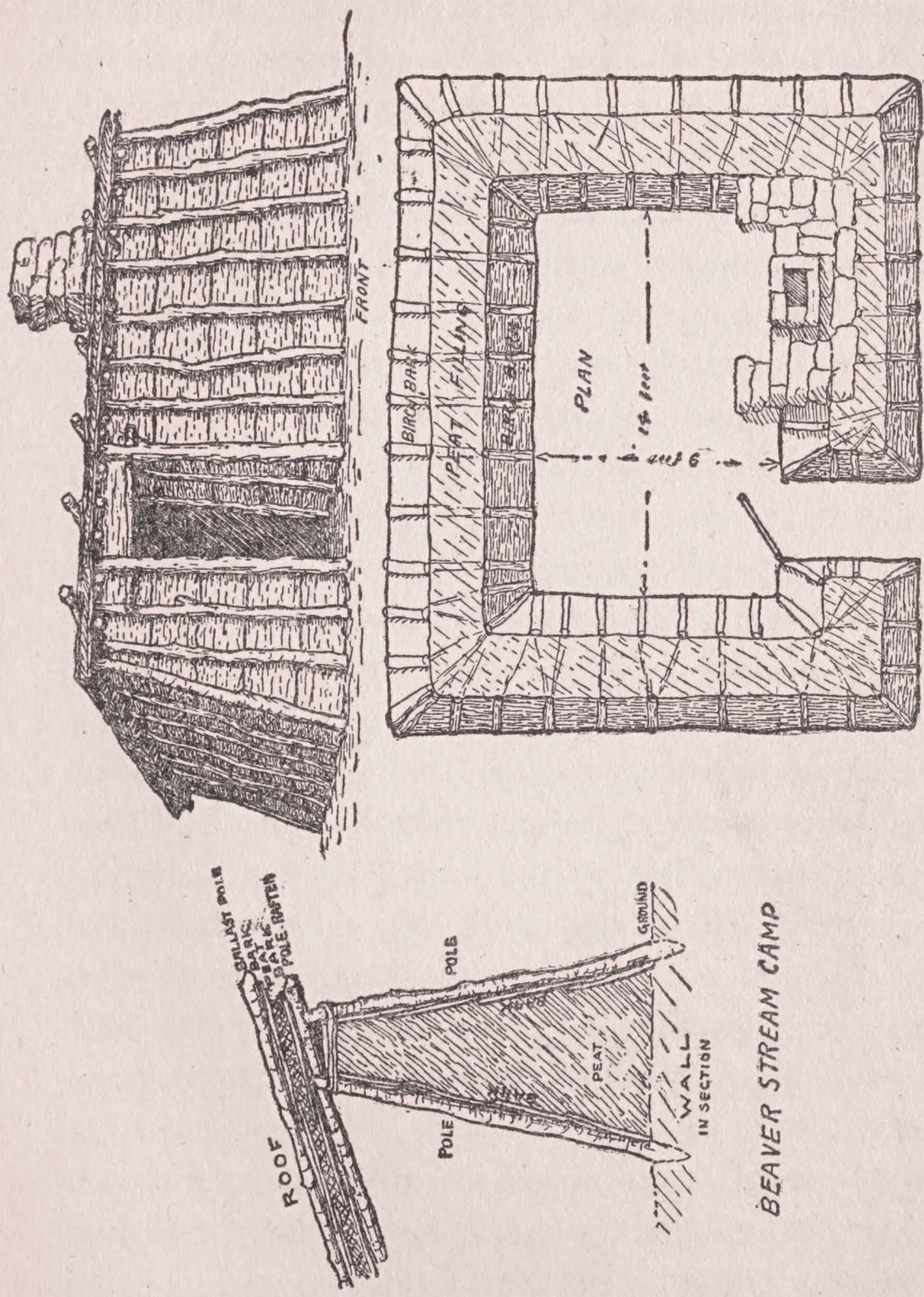
“What rotten luck!” was Jack’s remark, when the animals had vanished.

“What utter stupidity, I should call it,” Charlie replied. “Why on earth didn’t we think of the wind? Of course they could smell us long before we even came in sight. Oh, well, I suppose we shall learn some day, but in the meantime let us get a few berries; it’s about the last of these bake apples. The rain has pretty well spoilt them. Pity there are no blueberries near.”

They managed to find enough to help the next

two meals, and then returned to start Beaver Camp. First of all, the inside square was staked out and logs laid for the base of the walls; then great sheets of peaty earth were piled to form rough walls, against which on either side bark was placed. The next step was to lay a row of the straightest poles so that they pressed against the bark and held it in position, the lower and thicker ends being driven into the ground, the inner and outer rows leaning toward each other, so that the base of the wall was rather less than five feet wide and the upper part about two feet. The front of the hut was eight feet six inches in height, sloping to five feet at the back. This gave a steep enough pitch to carry off rain or melting snow, so that there would be little fear of leaks. The poles at the top were lashed to each other with witherod, in order that the filling of peat could be packed down very firmly.

It required nearly three days to complete the walls, after which the building of the chimney was commenced. At the end of a day and a half, a very respectable piece of rough masonry crowned their efforts. The fireplace was large enough to allow the use of good-sized wood, and was built on a good foundation of stone. The clay brought from the river proved to be the right kind and, after a little working, came into ex-



BEAVER STREAM CAMP

cellent condition. Flat stones abounded in the neighbourhood, so the work went along with little difficulty and the boys were extremely proud of their achievement. The roof required poles nearly fourteen feet long. These were difficult to obtain of the proper thickness. The beaver poles were not long enough, so they had to cut sapling with their knives, a very tedious task. Fourteen were required, and the boys' hands were blistered before they had secured the number. At length they had them, and it was the work of only a few minutes to put them in position with the bark laced and well overlapped. On top of the first layer were laid strips of peat, peeled from the rocks, till there was five inches between the two layers of bark. This, of course, made a considerable weight and a central support was needed. For this a stout, forked pole was used, with a six-foot piece laid in the crotch to distribute the support. All of this took two whole days, but at the end of that time the outside of the hut was completed, all but the door; a most satisfactory job it was, too, and the boys were justly proud.

"It won't take much fire to keep us warm in that house," Jack remarked. "Those walls will keep out the cold, I'll bet a dollar."

"The making of a door is going to be something

of a job. I expect we'll have to make it of two caribou skins stretched on a frame, with moss in between. Then it will be reasonably light and at the same time keep out some of the cold, but all these things can be done later. A rough shack outside to store our wood and one to store meat would be useful, but just now, if my tally stick tells the truth, it's the 29th of August, and we must be getting a move on or we'll be caught without food. Within the next week or two we should get our berry supply, or part of it at any rate, and the spatterdock roots."

"But, Charlie, don't you think we should try for a caribou to-morrow and also have a look at the pool to see if there are by chance any salmon? A few more would be welcome."

"Certainly," Charlie replied. "To-morrow we'll be up early, have a look at the salmon pool first, then to the caribou barren and see what luck is in wait for us. Failing to get anything in either place, we'll keep on to the blueberry bog, get a good lot, and perhaps run up against some ptarmigan. In the meantime, let us stop staring at and admiring our new palace and trot along back to camp and cook something, for I am famished. We've been so blessed interested in this house that our tummies have been sadly neglected of late. Oh! wait a moment. Where's your bow and an

arrow? Look over there just behind that low bush, a whopping big hare."

Jack, with his bow ready, took a couple of steps forward, staring intently at the low thick bush. Presently a very large hare hopped out into the open not twelve feet away, paying not the least attention to the two boys. Jack drew and fired with great care, and the hare fell.

"That settles the dinner question, at any rate," he said, as he marched forward and picked up his prize.

"That is what I call jolly good luck and we certainly needed something good for dinner. Come along now and let's eat him," Charlie said; and off they went.

On arriving at the camp they both noticed that the beacon fire had gone out, or at least was not sending up any smoke, so Charlie went to put it right, leaving Jack to get the camp fire ready for cooking. While he was busily engaged in skinning and washing the hare, he heard Charlie calling in a wildly excited manner:

"Jack, Jack, come here quick!"

Not knowing what was up, he dropped the hare and ran. Charlie was standing with his back to him, gazing intently out to sea, where a vessel was fast vanishing from sight round the lower headland. Jack watched it a moment, then said:

“By Jove, she must have passed within half a mile of us, but the fire was out, so of course she could not know we were here.”

“It’s almost the first time the beacon has been out since we came, and of course it happened at the wrong moment. Oh, well, there’s no use crying about it, but still, Jack, on the family’s account I’m frightfully sorry.”

“Yes, but why don’t you be quite honest and say that you would much rather stay on here, for a time anyhow. Just think how sick you would have been if we had had to leave our beautiful, new hut without even sleeping in it once. It’s rough on the family, very rough, but think what rejoicing there will be when the two prodigals return. Why, talk of fatted calves, we’ll be regular heroes and they’ll love us to death.”

“That’s all right, Jack. I confess I would not care to leave here yet, but I would like them to know at home that we are alive and happy,” Charlie replied, looking thoughtful.

“Oh, cheer up, old chap,” said Jack. “The boat’s gone, but my appetite hasn’t. Come along, finish your beacon fire job, and hustle back to grub. I’ll be off now to get that hare done”; and he ran back.

Four jays had discovered the freshly skinned hare and were enjoying their meal. Fortunately,

Jack had not been away very long, or he would have found nothing left but well-picked bones, as the jays have a great objection to letting anything be wasted and, after having eaten their fill, would certainly have carried away the rest and hidden it in the near-by trees. Their common name of camp robber is well earned. Jack rescued what was left of the hare and soon had it roasting in front of the fire. When Charlie returned dinner was ready. While they were eating it, Jack suggested that the supply of salt was not being made quickly enough, so they decided to get several more flat stones and water buckets and increase the output, as it would be much easier to do it at the camp near the sea than when they moved to Beaver Stream. The first thing next morning the salt collectors were arranged, and about nine o'clock the boys paid a visit to the salmon pool. One fish was seen, and after some difficulty they secured it, after which they made their way to First Stag Barren.

This time they were careful to approach from the lee side and found no less than four caribou—a very old stag, a single doe, and a doe with a fawn. Which to go after was the question. The old stag was in the best place to stalk, but he would undoubtedly prove very tough eating, and he looked thin. After some deliberation,

the solitary doe was chosen. Fortunately, she was near a clump of small spruces, so the boys crawled to the cover, but found after getting there that they were still nearly a hundred yards from the animal. As there was no chance of approaching any nearer, they could do nothing but wait in the hope that she might feed in their direction.

For about two hours they waited before the position improved, then the doe walked slowly, almost directly toward them. Then came the question whether to fire as she moved or try to get her to stop by making a noise. The former was considered better, because if she stopped she would probably turn head to them, which would mean a difficult shot. Slowly she approached, until at last she was within fifteen feet. At that distance they could not miss, so, full of confidence and excitement, they fired and had the satisfaction of killing almost immediately. The boys were greatly pleased with their success, and started at once to skin and clean the animal. This time nothing was wasted, and they procured sufficient material in the way of sinews and gut to make all the arrows they wanted, besides having plenty left for sewing and other possible uses. There was also a fine supply of meat and a good skin, which would be most useful. It was very late when they reached camp, laden down with their booty.

Then while Charlie prepared the meat for smoking, Jack went for the salmon that had been left hidden near the pool. But something had been there before him and the fish had vanished. It was too dark to see the tracks of the thief, so he returned to camp with the bad news, determined to make a careful examination in the morning. It might have been a fox, a bear, or an otter, but which was never known, as before morning there was a heavy rain which washed away the tracks.

In spite of the bad weather the boys had to keep at work, first of all on enlarging the smoke-house which was getting over-full, and then in gathering firewood. Later in the afternoon the weather cleared, and they visited the salmon pool but saw no sign of any fish. Evidently the main run had gone up toward the spawning beds, and if they wanted more fish that is where they would have to go. The day had not been a lucky one, as nothing had been added to their supplies, and they spent the rest of the evening making arrows. The gut proved most satisfactory for binding on both the feathers and the flint tips, and the finished arrows were thoroughly useful and workmanlike.

During the three days that followed, the weather was so bad that the boys could scarcely venture from the shelter of their lean-to. The



Photographed from Life

Caribou: doe and fawn

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wind blew with such violence that trees were uprooted and branches torn off in all directions. Several times it looked as though the lean-to would be hurled to the ground. Props had to be placed against it to keep it up, and against the smoke-house, so the boys had an anxious time. Cooking under these conditions was most difficult. In fact, it was only after a windbreak had been built of stones and sod that the fire could be utilized at all.

Toward the end of the third day the fury of the storm abated, and the boys, wondering whether their new hut had suffered, paid it a visit. Fortunately, the position of the hut had been well-chosen, and the thick woods had protected it from serious damage. Only a small part of the roof had been torn loose and this was quickly repaired. The following day was calm but very gloomy, and Charlie suggested a trip inland for berries and ptarmigan. The walk was entirely uneventful. One caribou was seen a long way off, but otherwise the country seemed unusually lacking in life. The gloom of the day was made doubly noticeable by the incessant croaking of the ravens, beyond which there was no sound.

The boys made straight for the blueberry bog, stopping only long enough to make large bark bags when they found suitable birch trees. The

berries had ripened since the last visit and were now in good condition for picking. Their extraordinary abundance made the filling of the bark bags a very easy matter, and by noon the receptacles were full. Then they were carried to the "ice-house," as it seemed likely that they would keep well if buried in the ice. On reaching the cold cave, Charlie said:

"Why not try putting some in the ice and the others in the small stream of cold water at the entrance of the cave? We could easily make a hole big enough to hold a couple of these bags."

Jack agreed, and after packing two of the bags in ice, they excavated a hole in the bed of the little stream and in this placed the remaining bags, with a large stone on top to keep them submerged and protect them against a possible visit from hungry or inquisitive bears. This done to their entire satisfaction, the boys went in search of ptarmigan and after a long chase succeeded in getting seven. Then a few more berries were picked for immediate use, and they started homeward, for the camp was now regarded quite in the light of a home. Their way led them past the sandy reach of the river. A short distance below the sand the water was fairly shallow and covered with long green grass, which waved in the current as though it were a living thing. On

a large flat stone in the stream Charlie noticed a collection of shells and asked Jack what he thought they could be.

"Fresh-water clams, I expect, and they have apparently been eaten by muskrats. Let's get some and see what they are like."

In a moment boots and stockings were off, and Jack soon had half a dozen very large clams, which he found under the waving grass. With the aid of a knife, one of the shells was opened and both boys looked at the yellowish clam and wondered if it could be eaten. As Jack turned the meat over, he noticed what at first seemed to be a large bubble, but on touching it with the point of his knife, it was found to be quite hard. With his finger he pushed it out, and to the delight and surprise of both boys, a large, round, pinkish pearl slid into the opened shell.

"By Jove!" Jack exclaimed. "What do you think of that? It's a real pearl, and what a beauty. I wonder how much it is worth."

"I don't know, but it certainly is a fine one," Charlie replied. "What a splendid colour, and so perfectly round. I say, we'll make our fortunes if we can get many like that. Let's open the others and see if there are any more such treasures."

They did so with feverish haste, and found

several more pearls, but all small and most of them imperfect. Notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, for they were still several miles from camp, they both got into the river and gathered clams as fast as possible. In a surprisingly short time they had several dozen thrown on the bank, and then began the exciting job of opening them. The second one that Charlie opened contained a beauty nearly as large as a pea and exquisite in colour. Unfortunately, it was not absolutely round. The total result of the catch was five large and fairly regular pearls and a number of small ones of various degrees of perfection. The occupation was so absorbing that another lot of clams was procured and still more pearls collected. Suddenly Charlie looked up from his work and exclaimed:

“Jack, do you realize what time it is? The sun has set and it will be dark jolly soon. We really must be moving, though I confess I’d far rather stick here and hunt for treasure. Come along, or we will get lost.”

With reluctance Jack abandoned his clams and tied his precious pearls in the corner of his handkerchief, and off they went. The sun had indeed set long ago, and before they had reached First Stag Barren night was on them and they found it difficult to make their way over the rough country.

Darker and darker it grew, not a star could be seen through the heavy banks of clouds, and the scattered clumps of spruce appeared as black shadows against the slightly lighter background. The boys floundered along, now stumbling over peaty tussocks, now into bog holes soft and slushy. All sense of direction was lost and after an hour they realized that they were far from the track which led to camp. Another hour and they found themselves back again at the river, for they had wandered in a circle, but the river was their salvation. They could follow its course even though it took them over some very rough country. Soon after they had started along the bank they came across a lot of clam shells.

"Talk about going in circles," said Jack. "Why, we've come back to where we started from an hour or two ago, and yet we thought we were going straight for camp. No wonder Steve or Andrew, I forget which, told us that nearly everyone did that. We must be more careful in the future."

"We certainly must; if it hadn't been for the river, we should have spent the night going round and round and all our treasure of pearls wouldn't have brought us a place in which to sleep. I think, Jack, my boy, we had better try to avoid any more night marches."

After what seemed an interminable time they came to Beaver Stream and from then on the way was easy. At last camp was reached and the boys were so tired they could scarcely manage to make fire and cook a couple of ptarmigan before turning in to sleep and dream of pearls as large as hens' eggs. The first thing in the morning Charlie suggested another trip for blueberries and Jack, laughing, said:

"Why don't you call them pearls, for you know jolly well that's what you mean."

"Well, of course we might try for some on our way back as we did yesterday, but really the berries are in the best possible condition for picking and we should take every opportunity to get in a good supply before they get nipped by the frost. I vote we start as soon as we have finished breakfast."

This accordingly was done, and they made their way as fast as possible to Blueberry Bog. As they came to the edge of the bog carrying their bark bags for berries, Jack who was walking a few yards ahead caught sight of an immense bear busily engaged, eating the sweet fruit. Quickly crouching down among the blueberry bushes he pointed out the bear to Charlie, who, following his example, got down on his knees. To shoot that bear with bow and arrow would be a great

feat, but then he looked so very large that the boys hesitated. Crouching low among the scrub they discussed the question in low whispers.

"Its coat would be very warm for us," said Charlie.

"True enough," Jack replied, "but I expect he would give us a good warming before we got it. Shall we have a try? It would be risky, but it's worth it I think. What say you, Charlie?"

"Can't quite make up my mind," he replied, staring at the glossy rich fur of the bear. After some time, he continued: "If only there was some way for us to escape in case he came for us I would feel better—but—well, I don't know."

"Come on, Charlie, if we can get very close and there is a chance for a good broadside shot let's have a try."

"Oh, very well, let's crawl round by that thick bush," Charlie replied, pointing to a low myrtle. With very modified enthusiasm they crept close to the ground and succeeded finally in reaching the bush. On peeping over the top they were horrified to see that the big bear was not more than eight or nine feet away. This was too close to be pleasant. However, each boy got his weapon ready, the best arrows were selected, and they waited with bows drawn taut, waited for what seemed hours, but the bear was in no hurry to

turn a side view. At last he did so and as Jack whispered *now*, both arrows flew. To miss at that close range was impossible. It was only a question of whether the arrows would strike a vital part.

There was no chance for speculation, for as soon as the shots were fired the bear came crashing almost straight for the frightened boys. The huge beast passed them within what seemed to be less than a yard, and both boys were too badly frightened to fire again until the bear was fifty feet or more away. Then Charlie fired at it and missed. Jack followed almost immediately and struck it in the back. The bear, feeling the shot, stopped, and, standing erect, turned toward the boys, who quickly reloaded and fired. One arrow struck true. The big beast wavered a moment, and then fell with a mighty crash stone dead. The boys could scarcely believe their eyes as they saw the effect of their arrows, and they rushed up to the animal so excited that they could scarcely speak. The bear was a splendid one and in prime condition, and as Charlie remarked while running his hands through the thick fur, "By Jove, won't this keep us warm."

"No berry finding for us to-day, I'm thinking, and no pearling either," Jack said. "We shall have all we can do to get this attended to, between

skinning and preparing the skin and getting the meat stored. Shall we put it in the ice-house or take it back to camp and smoke it?"

"Why not try both, half for each in case one should not succeed? Then there's the fat which is very useful, I believe, so we must save it carefully."

The skinning of the bear did not take so very long. As soon as it was done the meat was cut up and half of it carried up the hill to the ice cave, and there stored carefully. On the way back to the berry bog the boys got a couple of ptarmigan. The remainder of the meat and the skin made two fairly good loads, but a few berries were carried as well. The afternoon was still young when they started on the way to camp, and a visit to the clam beds was suggested. It would give them a chance to rest on the way.

"All the pearls we get won't add much to our load, I expect," said Jack, "so let's spend a couple of hours here and try our luck."

Charlie had not the slightest objection, for to tell the truth, the pearls fascinated him almost as much as they did Jack and he enjoyed the excitement of searching for them as much as anything he had ever done. There was always the chance of finding a really fine specimen, and each clam hid its secret so well that

none could tell which one contained the longed-for treasure. Scarcely were the loads thrown down than, with boots off, the boys were in the water feeling under the grass for the clams. As fast as they were found they were thrown on the bank, until after half an hour's work there was a good-sized pile ready to be opened. The first two dozen or more gave nothing but small pearls, and not many of these. Then came a few of fair size, including some very perfect ones, but nothing exciting occurred until they got down toward the last of the pile, when Charlie found a beauty, large, round, and dark smoke-coloured with rich pink and purple reflections. It was a prize worth having and both boys were greatly excited. The very next clam that Charlie opened contained another splendid specimen of the most delicate pinky tones. Jack, too, got a fine one, so they were thoroughly satisfied with their afternoon's work. As Jack said:

"It paid to rest where you could pick up pearls with so little trouble."

Their luck was, of course, quite exceptional, for in Newfoundland pearls may be found in the clams of some rivers. Yet they are very scarce, and only once in a great while is one found of saleable size. It happened that the river in which the boys discovered the pearls was unusually suitable. The

clean, sharp white sand evidently drifted down to the clam bed, and, getting into the clams when they were feeding, formed the cause of irritation which resulted in the formation of the pearls. As a rule, the clams are found chiefly in muddy bottoms where there is no fine sand, hence one reason for the absence of pearls.

The boys arrived at camp shortly before dark in a very happy frame of mind. The day had been perhaps the most successful since their arrival. Not only were there the three fine pearls and many good smaller ones; but the bear, besides representing a feat of arms of which they had every reason to be proud, gave them a really useful robe, a supply of good meat, and a lot of much-needed fat. The meat was hung up in the smoke-house, all but enough for a couple of meals, and then they roasted a piece for supper. The excitement of the day had made them very tired, and after a few minutes' talk over the adventures, they fell asleep.

CHAPTER XII

THEY TAN THE BEAR SKIN—GET MORE PEARLS, BERRIES, AND FIREWOOD—SEE SOME BEAVER WORK—A WEASEL SUPPLIES THEM WITH THEIR DINNER—THEY GET THEIR HARVEST OF ROOTS—MOVE TO BEAVER STREAM CAMP—COLLECT ACORNS—TRY CARIBOU MOSS FOR FOOD AND MAKE SNOW-SHOES

THE next day brought thoroughly disagreeable weather. A cold rain and fog made any idea of a long trip inland out of the question, so after gathering a supply of firewood, the boys amused themselves by trying to tan the bear's skin with the animal's brains. This they had heard was the proper way when there was nothing better available.

"I wonder if the brains should be cooked or raw?" Jack asked.

"I really cannot remember, but it seems to me that I read once about using liver or something with the brains, and one of the two were first boiled. However, the brains used raw will probably make some sort of a job, but we'll have to do a lot of rubbing, I expect," Charlie replied.

"I expect so, too, but hadn't we first better scrape the skin thoroughly so as to get all the

scraps of meat and fat off? I'm sure that's necessary."

This, accordingly, they proceeded to do, and it proved very slow work. As soon as the skin was fairly clean, they took the brains and rubbed in a little, and, after warming the skin near the fire, began to work it with their hands. It seemed an endless task, and they wondered if it would ever be finished. As they did one part, the rest was laid across a log close to the fire, and to their disgust it began to harden as it dried. Evidently more rubbing and working was necessary, and this was kept up for many hours, until their fingers became quite sore. At last, however, the results of their labour became evident, for in some places the skin began to dry soft. Another two hours of steady work, and the whole skin was fairly dry and more or less soft and pliable.

"Now, let's hang it in the smokery, Jack; I'm sure that will be good for it," said Charlie, as he surveyed the fine robe. The idea was practical and was at once carried out, and the skin was added to the much-overcrowded smoke-house.

"I say, we really ought to take some of this stuff out of here, it's absolutely chock-a-block," Jack remarked, as he emerged from the smoky interior rubbing his smarting eyes.

"And where shall we put it?" Charlie replied.

"It must be kept dry, especially the salmon, or else it will be sure to spoil, especially if we get any warm weather. Why couldn't we take it up to Beaver Stream Camp and hang it in the house? I don't believe anything would touch it."

"Right you are, but let us take only a little at first and see what happens, as it wouldn't do to run the risk of losing all this supply. Let's take three fish and a part of the caribou, and we can easily fix up some sort of barricade as we have no door."

"Very well, Jack, we'll do so, but I think it will be wiser to carry it up on a dry day, as the rain would soften it and start trouble."

The wet day had passed quite quickly with the tanning of the skin and various other odd jobs, and the boys were glad to see signs of clearing in the west as evening set in. There was a soft yellow light near the horizon and a thinning of the clouds, which promised well for the morrow. Plans were made, before turning in, to go for more berries, and perhaps spend another hour or so in pearl gathering. The weather kept its promise of the evening, and the morning broke clear and quiet and fairly warm, so the boys had an early breakfast and started for Blueberry Bog. No bears were there when they arrived, so they devoted their entire attention to picking the bright

blue fruit with which the low bushes were so thickly covered. Four big bark pails were filled and carried to the ice-house and put safely away. Then they filled four more pails to be taken back to camp. Part of this lot was to be stored under water and part to be dried. They didn't want all their eggs in one basket, and no one could tell what might happen; if one lot was lost there was a chance of saving at least part of their supply.

It was late in the afternoon when the pearl bed was reached on their way to camp, so they had only an hour in which to hunt for treasure, for as Charlie wisely remarked:

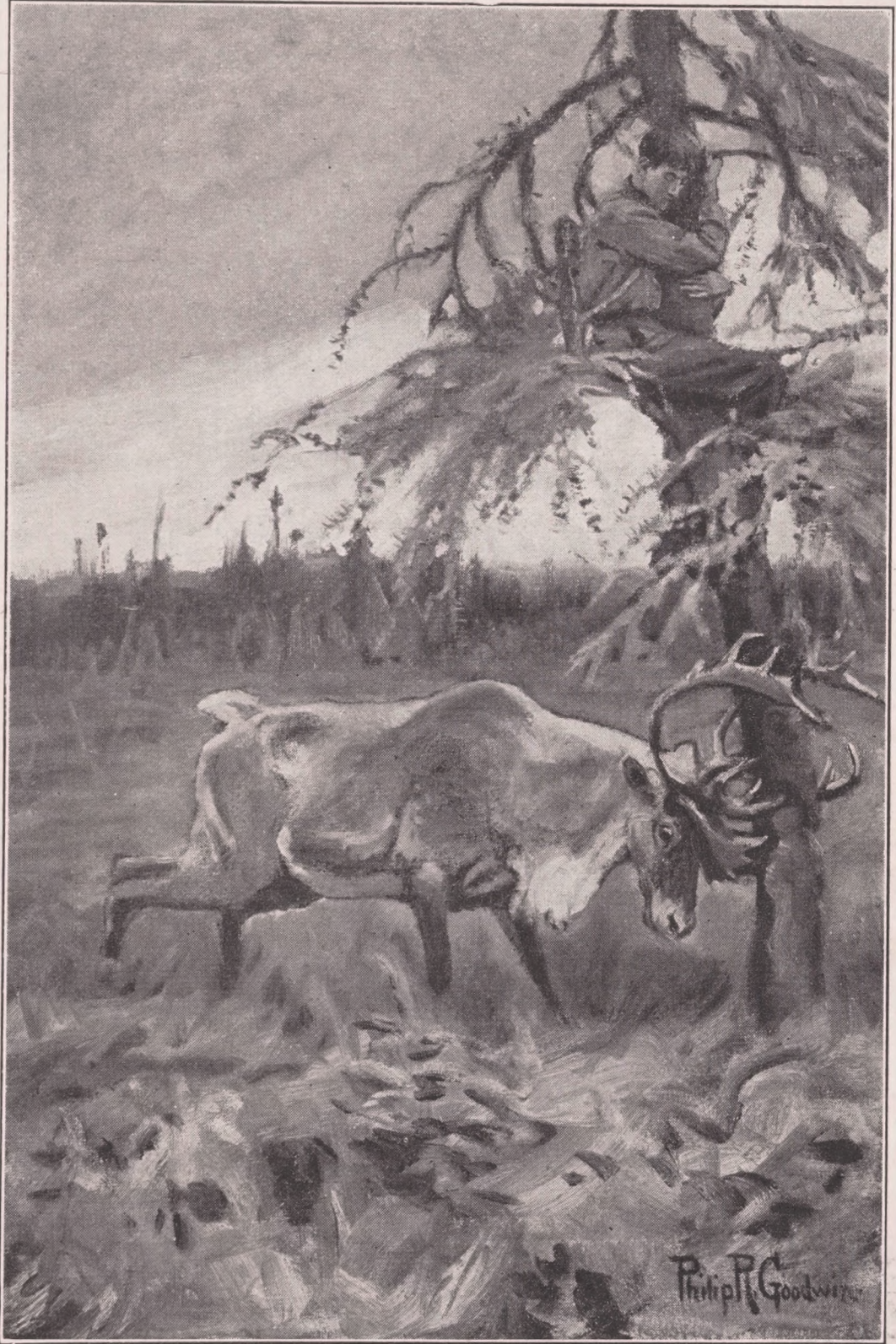
“All the pearls in the world won't be much use to us if we have not got grub.”

The storing of food was their chief task and anxiety, and for that everything must be sacrificed. Seven weeks still remained before there was much danger of bad weather and deep snow, and there was a lot to be done in that time. Only an occasional hour could be devoted to treasure hunting until the supplies of food had been procured and full preparations made for the long, long winter. The result of an hour's hard work at finding and opening clams was very satisfactory, and though no very large pearls were found, they got a number of medium-sized ones, many

of which were of excellent quality. So they returned to camp as happy as could be. It was decided that the following day should be devoted to building a large shelter for firewood, and if there was time, they would visit the beaver dams and run some more wood down stream. The boys had breakfast before daylight, and then went to commence the shelter hut. Before leaving, some of the blueberries were laid out to dry, and the rest were taken to the house, together with some fish and meat from the smoke-house. Near Beaver Stream Camp a large hole was excavated in a boggy place. This filled immediately with very cold water, into which the berries were placed and carefully covered with boughs to protect and keep them cool. On looking over the supply of building material it was found that more would be needed for making the shelter. So the boys went up stream to the dams with the intention of floating some more beaver wood down to the landing place.

“By Jove!” exclaimed Charlie, as they reached the dams. “I’ll be hanged if the beaver haven’t mended it”; and sure enough, the opening made in the lower dam was thoroughly closed and most of the injury done by the boys to the upper one was repaired.

“Which means,” said the practical Jack, “that we shall have all the work of making a fresh open-



“The stag crashed with full weight against the tree. It was a close shave, but Jack was safe”

ing. Let's see where they cut the trees, for nearly all of the repairs have been done with freshly cut wood."

So the boys went in search of the beaver's cuttings. They soon found a number of shining white stumps of poplar and birch, and near some of them were the prostrate trunks from which in many cases only the tops and branches had been cut. Several of the trunks were marked at intervals varying with their thickness with small cuts as though the beaver intended later to divide the trees at these points. Jack, seeing these, said:

"This is a find, for we can get these long pieces down to the stream and float them down, and they'll be uncommonly useful for building material."

No sooner said than done, and the logs were quickly rolled or carried to the water's edge and steered toward the dam. More than a dozen fine, long ones were secured, hauled over the upper dam, then a lot of material was loosened so that the pond between the two dams was filled with floating wood. The next thing to do was to open the lower dam. This took some time, as the repair work had been thoroughly well done. Eventually, however, an opening of sufficient size was made and the logs started down stream, Jack going ahead to land them as they reached the camp.

Before noon more than enough material had been collected to build the shelter, and the boys sat down to rest and have lunch before beginning the work. The structure was a very simple one, a framework of fairly strong poles covered over with boughs, and it was placed close to the door of the house, a covered way leading from one to the other. The part of the shelter nearest to the house was more carefully made, and had a bark roof and thick earth-filled walls. This was to be the store-house for meat and other things that could not be kept in the heated house. By evening the task was finished and the boys returned to camp. On their way they heard a strange sound.

“What can that be?” cried Jack, as the painful crying continued.

It seemed to be in the tangle of grass and shrubs and not more than fifty yards away. Charlie suggested a closer examination, so they both crept toward the sound. As they came nearer, it died down till there was nothing but a low wailing that could scarcely be heard. In the dim evening light it was uncanny, and the boys were almost afraid to approach. The sound grew fainter each minute, and at last Charlie caught sight of the cause. A weasel had seized a hare back of its ear and was slowly killing it and drinking the warm blood. Thinking only to rescue the wretched animal, he rushed for-

ward; at first the weasel refused to let go of his prey, and not until Charlie was within a couple of feet did it relinquish its death grip and move away, gliding in and out of the tussocks, repeatedly coming so close that it seemed as though it would actually attack. Charlie picked up the hare, which was dead at last. He had come too late to save it.

"Let's keep it," said Jack. "It will make a good dinner for us and save the other food."

Charlie looked first at the hare and then at the indignant weasel, who kept darting about and peering at the intruders with its cruel little, bead-like eyes.

"It's rather a shabby trick," he said, "to bag the little brute's dinner, but I suppose he can catch another more easily than we can, so let's take it along. It will be jolly handy, and it's some time since we had a hare."

It was quite dark when they reached camp, but the fire was soon made and a part of the hare roasted for supper. With the flaring up of the fire the boys discovered the sad fact that most of their drying blueberries had vanished, how or where they did not know.

"I'll bet it's that rascally jay that has made such friends with us lately, evidently with a purpose," said Jack, laughing, referring to a jay which

recently had been about the camp a great deal and had become very friendly.

"Yes," Charlie replied, "I expect it must be our little fluffy friend. Jolly lucky we didn't leave many berries out to dry. As it is, more than half of what we put out have gone, and I don't see how we are going to protect it unless perhaps we might put a piece of bark an inch or two above the berries. What are left seem to have scarcely begun drying. Looks like a long job, doesn't it?"

"Yes, it does, and so far not a very paying one. Now what are the plans for to-morrow?" Jack asked, as he picked a bone.

"Let us get some more wood from the dams while they are still open and the water is fairly high. Then next day we can make another trip for berries."

"How about the spatterdock roots? Shall we wait till later for that?"

"I think so, for a few days at any rate. For the moment, the berries are most important, as we may expect frost in a very short time," Charlie replied. "Let's have breakfast very early so as to make a good long day and get in a lot of wood," he added, as he threw himself on the bed.

During the night there was a heavy fall of rain, much to the boys' delight, as it would give a good

head of water for running their wood. A very early start was made in the morning, and the boys on arriving at the dam could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw that the large opening which had been made only the previous day was mended again. They did not know or understand the industry of beaver, not only their industry but the extraordinary perseverance. Had the dam been broken open every day for two weeks or more, it would be repaired each night with unfailing regularity.

Charlie, with the look of surprise in his face, said: "Well, any one would have thought that we had hired these beaver to do our work. Here the very thing we wanted has been done. We should have had to close the dam before collecting the wood from above, otherwise it would drift down the stream and escape. So here come the little chaps, and as soon as our backs are turned they mend the break, and do it far better than we could."

"Talk about returning good for evil, Charlie. If ever there was a case of that, here it is. We smash their dam, steal their wood, and then, as though they hadn't helped us enough, they do this. It makes me hate to take their wood, but I suppose we must have it."

"Yes," Charlie replied. "I suppose we must."

It will mean more to us than to them. Of course, if we had an axe, we would have no excuse for this highway robbery. Do you know what I should like to do to-night when our work is finished?"

"I think I can guess. Come back and watch the beaver repairing the dam."

"Yes, Jack, I vote we do it, too; it would be awfully interesting to see how they manage it. Just now, however, we had better be getting to work."

The result of the day's labour was a fine pile of firewood, stacked up to dry near the shelter, and two very much-reduced dams. Practically all the sound wood of the upper structure was taken and a large part of the lower one, too.

About an hour before sunset the boys returned to the pool and selected a good observation point on the lee shore, so that there was not much chance that the animals could smell them. They had been watching about half an hour when a small ripple was seen at the farther side of the pond. Soon the boys made out a beaver swimming along not far from shore and coming toward them. It was the beaver on his tour of investigation, to make sure that all was safe before letting the rest of the family come out to feed and work. The entire circle of the pond was made; sometimes he went fast, sometimes slow; and several times, as

though suspicious, he stopped perfectly still for quite a long time. At last, satisfied that all was well, he went to where a cluster of willows and alders grew at the water's edge, and, cutting a small branch, sat in the shallow water and began eating the bark from it. The grating sound of his sharp teeth could easily be heard, and evidently it was intended as a signal of safety, for almost immediately the rest of the beaver family appeared in the water near the large lodge, seven of them altogether. They swam about for a short time and then went to the water's edge and began their frugal repast.

By this time the sun had set, and the beautiful quiet gloom of twilight took the place of the bright day. As the boys watched and listened there was no sound save the scraping of the many sets of sharp teeth, and occasionally the *whōō*, *whōō*, *whōō*, *whō whōōō* of the owls. The golden glow of the sky was reflected in this placid pool, and the reflections of the dark trees seemed as solid as their originals. It was all very beautiful. To add to the interest of the picture, two beaver swam across the pond, each bringing a long stick. On they came till they reached the upper dam, not more than thirty yards from where the boys crouched. Each beaver appeared to know exactly what to do. The sticks were pushed into the

broken part of the dam and secured in their place. Then one of the two came out on to the exposed crest of the dam and walked slowly along as though trying to estimate the amount of damage that had been done to the structure. While he was thus engaged, two other beaver came over, one bringing a large sod and the other a piece of wood. This material was carefully disposed of. Then one after the other they all dived and brought up large chunks of black muck, which were added to the facing of the dam where it had been injured. The boys were intensely interested in watching the proceedings and failed to notice that a very gentle breeze, so gentle that it was scarcely perceptible, had sprung up and was blowing softly from them to the pond. Suddenly all work stopped, and one of the beaver after a moment's hesitation struck the water a resounding smack with his tail, and instantly all four disappeared. From the other side of the pond an answering splash was heard, and then once more absolute silence reigned.*

“That ends the show for this time,” said Jack. “Guess we might as well trot along home and get something to eat; but I did enjoy watching those little beasts working, didn’t you?”

*Full details of the work done by beavers will be found in “The Romance of the Beaver” by the same author.

"Rather. I'm only sorry there wasn't better light, so that we could have seen them more clearly. It would be a good idea to come again another evening when we have a chance. Perhaps we may see them doing something else."

"I want to see them cutting down a tree," said Jack.

"So do I," Charlie replied, "but I expect we shall not have much chance of seeing that except by moonlight."

"I wonder if it's true that they always cut a tree down so that it falls toward the water?" Jack asked.

"It looks like it, for nearly every tree we have seen down was cut that way, but I expect it's because the trees grow toward the open space of the pond. Most of them lean that way, and you notice that the branches are thickest on the water side, so no matter how the tree was cut it would most probably fall in that direction."

"I expect you're right; but if that is so, why do the writers always make such a fuss about what they say is one of the marvellous examples of the beaver skill, when really it's only a perfectly natural result?"

"Don't you remember, Jack, what Mr. Pratt and your father often said, that so many of the natural history writers try to find wonderful

reasons for what animals do and point out such things as this, which are not very wonderful, and fail to see the really marvellous things? They don't use their eyes enough, I expect."

"You mean they don't connect their eyes to their brains, as Dad used to say. Well, if only we have the time, we ought to have a fine chance to study beaver work here. Then we can write a book about it when we get home, whenever that will be. Do you realize that it's very nearly six weeks since we landed? Seems like six years, doesn't it?"

"Yes, it does; but I confess I have never enjoyed any six weeks so much. Still, some civilized food would taste good. Think of a nice rich pun'kin pie."

"Oh, shut up! Let's forget all such delicacies and enjoy our smoked caribou—I mean venison, that sounds better—and salmon and hares and ptarmigan, to say nothing of blueberries and spatterdock roots and reindeer moss, though we haven't tried that yet. Do you know, we have a fine variety to choose from, though I confess I'd swap some of it for a bit of good bread and butter, or a plate of well-browned slapjacks with maple syrup; positively makes my mouth water to think of it."

"Hold on, Jack, or I'll murder you. I vote we

agree not to mention such things again until we see some chance of getting them. Here we are," said Charlie, as they reached camp. "Now let's get a move on and get some grub, for I'm tired through and through."

The next day was spent in gathering blueberries, with the usual stop at the clam bed.

"The pearls don't seem to be at home to-day," said Jack, as they opened one after another of the clams and only found a few very small pearls. Only one of decent size was obtained, which was disappointing. However, the following day they had much better luck, when after gathering a lot of berries they devoted a couple of hours to their favourite pastime. No less than seven fine pearls were found, one of which was of extraordinary size and beauty. Three more days were devoted to berries and pearls with satisfactory results. The quantity of fruit now collected was sufficient to last a very long time, and the next thing to claim their attention was the harvest of spatterdock roots. It was decided to store these in two ways, under water and in wet moss, well covered over to protect them from the frost. The gathering of the roots was a rather difficult task and occupied a considerable amount of time. For eight days the boys laboured incessantly, dragging the soft muddy bottoms of every pool

within several miles of the camp. In the end, a good supply was obtained and carefully stored close to the hut. In the bog a small pond was made, into which half of the supply was packed and covered over with bark and boughs, while the other half was banked up with moss and earth. A whole day was spent doing this. One evening the boys were sitting before their fire enjoying the warmth of the glowing logs. They had just finished their meal, when Jack said:

"I suppose the migration of caribou is due to begin within the next three weeks, for I think Andrew said it could be expected about the middle of October, and this is the 23rd of September, if I am not mistaken. Oughtn't we make our preparations for them?"

"Yes," Charlie replied, "we should have a couple of extra bows, at any rate, but that's about all the preparation there is to be made. We should, however, do practically all that needs to be done before snow comes, as soon as possible. I would suggest that we move to our hut, so that we can make it more comfortable. It will save us a good deal of walking. One of us can come here each day to attend to the beacon, though I confess I've pretty well lost hope in it doing any good. If you like, we could make a lean-to near the hut and live in it until the cold weather."

“Right you are. We can do that, and why not make the move to-morrow. Then we’ll be on the spot and be able to get things in readiness.”

“Very well, Jack. To-morrow we leave and take our goods and chattels with us. One of the first things we should do is to make two pair of snow-shoes, as we cannot tell when the heavy snow will come.”

The next day all the belongings were carried up to the Beaver Stream Camp, including the smoked meat and fish. This was hung in the larder, as the boys called the enclosed end of the shelter. A lean-to was built with its back against the front of the hut, with a fireplace in front and a small smoke-house was made opposite the hut, so that any fresh meat procured before cold weather could be kept in good condition, and the place began to look quite like a little colony. All of this occupied the day from dawn till dark, and the boys were thoroughly tired when they sat down to enjoy their evening meal. A hunt for ptarmigan was decided on for the next day, as these birds furnished the best food they could get. Very early in the morning, Charlie went to River Camp in order to put fuel on the beacon fire, while Jack got breakfast ready and attended to odd jobs. Immediately after breakfast they started up country in search of birds. Before

reaching the top of the hill, which was named Look-out Hill, they had secured sixteen ptarmigan, all of which were stored in the ice-house, after being carefully cleaned. Four more were killed on the way back, and a large bag of blueberries picked. It was too late to stop at the clam beds, much to the boys' disgust, as they were very anxious to find more pearls.

"Let's spend one whole day here soon," said Jack, as they passed the clam beds, "and see how many we can get. We have surely earned a little rest after all the hard work we have been doing lately; so what do you say to coming here to-morrow and trying our luck?"

Charlie agreed, and the following day they came.

"We'll get a really large pile before we begin opening any," Charlie suggested; so they waded in and for three hours did nothing but search for clams. A large pile was collected, and then after a light lunch of cold ptarmigan and berries, the exciting work commenced. The first clam opened by Jack produced a splendid dark pearl. It was an omen of good luck, he declared, as he laid his treasure on a piece of bark; and so it proved. Never had they enjoyed such wonderful success, and by the time the last clam was opened, they had a collection of nearly a hundred large and

reasonable-sized pearls. How much the lot represented, the boys had no idea, but it seemed to them that they must be worth a fortune.

Unfortunately, fresh-water pearls have little value as compared to those found in salt water, but they did not know this and they gloated over their treasure before packing them up carefully. On their way to camp, several caribou were seen; among them was one very large stag with remarkable horns, from which hung shreds of velvet that blew about as the animal moved across the wind-swept barren. The boys were delighted to see such a splendid creature and only regretted that the lateness of the hour prevented them stalking it, so that they might have a nearer view.

Gathering firewood was the next task to be undertaken. This meant another visit to the beaver dams, which were found to have been entirely repaired and a great deal of new wood added. Evidently the beaver had been very busy since their last visit, for the ground all round the pond was strewn with freshly cut trees from which all the smaller branches and tops had been cut. In the pond, the lodges showed that repairs were being carried on, and near each of them a small pile of browse showed above water. This was the supply of winter food. The boys spent some time examining the new work, and then

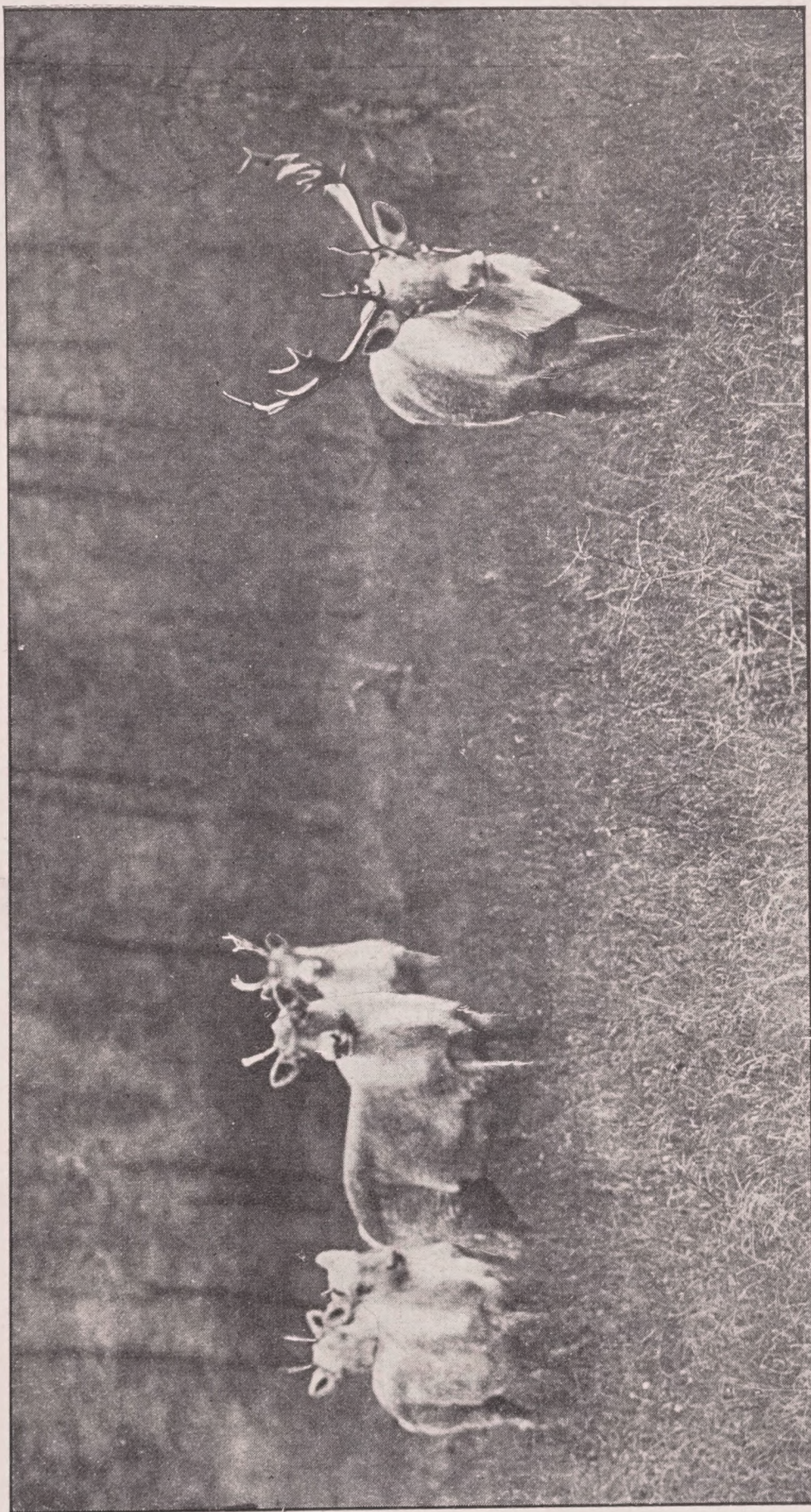
turned to the task of collecting firewood. They employed the same method as on previous occasions and with the same satisfactory results.

Four days were devoted to the task, and an immense pile of wood was collected. It was all stacked up to dry near the wood house, to be put under shelter as soon as it was ready. During these days the drying of blueberries progressed with great success, so much so that it was decided to devote two days to getting more of the fruit. A few "pears" (Newfoundland name for Service berries) were also found, but as these did not keep they were used at once and made a welcome change from the blueberries.

"What about the acorns?" said Charlie one evening. "Oughtn't we to have a look at those and see how they are getting along? And let's try the caribou moss, too, so that if it's good we can gather some before it's covered with snow."

"Very well, we'll go to-morrow and get what acorns we can, and try some of the moss also; and while we are out, we can get the frame wood for our snow-shoes. I expect the mountain ash will do, or young maple. We'll try both," Jack replied, and so on the following day they started for the oak trees they had seen some weeks ago.

They were found without much difficulty, and the acorns were about ripe. By beating the



Photographed from Life

Group of Newfoundland caribou

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branches a large number were secured from each of the two trees, but unfortunately they appeared to be the only oaks in the neighbourhood, for though the boys walked for several miles through the wood, no more were found. This meant that every acorn must be taken from the two trees, which by mere chance they had been lucky enough to discover. The dried caribou skins had been brought to be used as bags, and they easily held all the acorns. On the way back to camp, the boys secured some wood suitable for snow-shoe frames and some caribou moss. So the rest of the afternoon was well occupied in cutting down the saplings to the required thickness for the snow-shoes and in boiling the moss. It did not take long to finish trimming the long strips of wood. These were about eight feet long and one inch square. Unfortunately, the boys had never seen the round snow-shoes made for use in hilly countries, so they stuck to the conventional long pattern. After making several attempts to bend the strips, Charlie became discouraged, and said:

“Whatever shall we do to get the proper shape? This wood will break for certain if we bend it, and even if we get it to the required shape it would have so much spring that it would be very hard to keep it right.”

“Why not try steaming it?” said Jack. “That’s what they always do to get wood into any particular shape.”

“That’s all very well, but how shall we steam it?” Charlie asked.

“I really don’t know. Perhaps we can first soak the wood in water and then wrap green moss round the middle where we want it to bend and hold it close to the fire. I’m nearly sure the wet moss will make it steam without burning. We can try it, anyhow.”

While the wood was soaking in the water, the boys took a look at the moss, which was cooking.

“Well, a more disgusting-looking mess I’ve never seen. It’s all slime. If it doesn’t taste better than it looks, we won’t have to store much of it,” Jack observed. Charlie’s expression was far from hopeful, as he remarked:

“Perhaps it’s not quite done. Let’s taste it.” He did so. “Why, it’s not so very bad. Perhaps another hour’s cooking will make it better. But I’ll tell you what, I believe it would do very well in soup, as it’s rather like gelatine.”

Jack also took a taste, and said:

“Perhaps it will be better when it’s cold.”

But neither cold nor hot was it very toothsome. After some deliberation, it was decided to gather a small supply of the moss as an emergency ration,

in case anything happened to the spatterdock roots. Some starchy food would be necessary, and this was better than nothing. With meat it would be passable. After supper, by the light of the fire, the boys tried steaming the strips of wood, and were surprised to find how well their plan worked. The hot moss was kept wet and the wood soon became quite pliable, and was easily bent to the approximate shape when it was securely fastened and left to dry.

"Now we must get a caribou and use its skin for the webbing," Charlie said, as he put a fresh log on the fire and turned in.

"It will be rather a difficult job, I'm thinking," Jack replied, "and the results will not be very beautiful. I suppose we'll have first to dry the skin tight and then cut the thin strips and soak them."

"That's all right, Jack, but we must first soak the skin and rub it with ashes, I believe, to get the hair off. We'll have a hunt for caribou to-morrow if the weather is decent."

CHAPTER XIII

THEY GO CARIBOU HUNTING—SEE A GREAT STAG FIGHT—ARE ATTACKED BY ONE OF THE FIGHTING STAGS—HAVE NARROW ESCAPE—GET A CARIBOU AND USE THE SKIN FOR SNOW-SHOES—THE FIRST SNOW COMES, ALSO THE MIGRATION OF CARIBOU

THE morning was fairly fine, and the boys started off with their bows and arrows toward First Stag Barren. On arriving there they saw one small caribou at the farther end, and decided to stalk it, as the wind was in the right direction. It was, of course, necessary to keep out of sight, so they skirted the edge of the barren, keeping among the fringe of stunted trees. They had not gone far before a strange snorting sound was heard. It appeared to come from a dense clump of trees directly ahead and not very far away. What it was the boys could not guess. Again the loud snort, followed almost immediately by another very similar one from a different direction.

“What can it be?” said Jack, in a hushed voice.

Charlie replied in a whisper: “I haven’t the slightest idea. Do you suppose they are lynx or bear?”

Scarcely had he said the last word, when a large caribou stag came crashing past without seeing them. His heavy antlered head was thrown back, his nostrils dilated, and his eyes gleaming. On he went toward the dense belt of trees ahead, and the boys silently followed through the opening in the trees through which the stag had disappeared. Peering cautiously between the screen of branches, they saw a wonderful sight.

Not fifteen yards in front of them stood the stag, staring at another and still larger one that was standing near three does on the farther side of the small tree-enclosed barren. For several minutes no animal made a move, and the boys had a good opportunity to examine and compare the heads of the two superb creatures. The nearer and smaller one had heavy, compact, closely branched antlers, which were of the most brilliant orange colour. The other stag was a larger animal and had immensely long horns with very massive brow antlers, but otherwise the horns were inclined to be straggly. It seemed as though the two stags were mounted specimens, so still did they stand, while the does, after making a careful examination, began feeding with absolute indifference to what might be going to happen.

Suddenly, when the boys were beginning to grow impatient, the nearer stag made a move as though

he were going over to the does, and instantly the big fellow lowered his head and came forward at a quick trot. What happened after that is difficult to say. All that the boys knew was that the two stags met with a mighty crash and commenced such a fight as is seldom seen. Backward and forward they forced one another, striking and parrying with lightning speed. Occasionally a body blow would be struck, and blood stained their heavy white necks. The ground was plowed up in a large circle, as though a shell had exploded. Needless to say, the boys grew more and more excited. They even came out in the open that they might see more clearly, and the fighting stags took not the slightest notice of them.

The does looked up occasionally, but were not interested in anything so much as feeding. For a long time the great fight continued, and the younger stag was, if anything, getting the better of it. Twice he had forced the larger one down, but was not able to keep him there. Several times their horns got firmly locked for a few minutes, but the frantic efforts of their owners disengaged them. Both animals were getting weary; they foamed at the mouth and their eyes seemed to be bulging out of their sockets. The boys wondered whether it was to be a fight to the death. Apparently so, for the older creature was evidently

getting more than he could stand, and yet would not give in. Now and then he tried to turn and run away, but it only made matters worse, and before he could turn he received frightful punishment. At last, he stumbled and fell, when the younger stag struck him with such terrific force that he could not rise. Seeing this, the boys rushed forward in the hope of saving the game old warrior's life, but the victor, mad with the lust of battle, turned on them without a moment's hesitation. It was an awful moment, and the boys scarcely knew what to do. By good luck, they each decided to go in a different direction, and the stag for the moment stopped, as though not knowing which one to pursue. That brief moment meant everything to the fleeing boys. Over the soft spongy moss they went, as though they had wings. The stag soon made up his mind which to follow and rushed after Jack at full speed, scattering moss high in the air as he went. Jack, seeing the danger, went straight for a partly dead juniper, and with wonderful agility swung himself up on to one of the branches. Not a second too soon, for the stag crashed with full weight against the tree, which shook with the impact. It was a close shave, but Jack was safe, and he called out to Charlie:

"The beast won't let me down. Get into a

safe place and try shooting him; but be jolly careful he doesn't see you unless you're up a tree; and by the way, don't shoot me by mistake."

Charlie had stopped close to the woods as soon as he saw that he was not being pursued, and now he drew his bow and arrow and commenced a careful approach toward the infuriated stag, which continued to strike the hard tree trunk with all his force. Selecting a large tree, Charlie stood behind it and, at a distance of about twenty-five yards, opened fire. He was too excited to shoot straight. Five arrows went wide and then one struck the stag in the flank. The sting made him more mad than ever, and he flew at the tree with renewed vigour, shaking it so much that Jack was afraid he would be thrown out.

Unfortunately, in running he had dropped his bow, so could not fire a shot. Again an arrow struck the stag, and this time he turned round and caught sight of Charlie. Instantly he left the tree and headed for him at full tilt, and Charlie had barely time to swing himself clear of the ground. As he did so, his quiver turned upside down and all the arrows fell out. He had his bow and no arrows, while Jack had arrows and no bow, and they both laughed across to each other at the strangeness of their predicament, while the stag rushed first at one and then at the other in ungovernable rage.

For some time this continued, but finally the pain from the arrows in his flank, and the wounds received in battle, began to tell on him, and he grew very weary and finally walked away, a thoroughly dejected conqueror. In the meantime, the does for whom all the fighting had taken place were nowhere to be seen. They had quietly vanished at the sight of human beings. The two boys came down from their trees, and after picking up their weapons, went over to the old stag. He was quite dead. A great gash in the neck had cut an artery and he had bled to death, vanquished by the younger animal.

"Poor old beast, he certainly put up a great fight and died game," said Charlie, looking down with a feeling of compassion and admiration at the great stag. "A grand old warrior. I'll bet it was not his first battle. But I'm awfully glad we were here to see the fight. Wasn't it exciting? Just as well for us that those trees were handy, for that other chap would have given us a lively time."

"Did you ever know anything worse for sprinting on than this bog?" asked Jack. "It's like those dreams one often has when one's feet keep moving without going ahead. A regular nightmare! and that snorting stag got over it as easily as possible. Pity we haven't got large spreading

feet like he has; they're regular snow-shoes. Well, we've got the skin we came for, though scarcely in the way we expected to get it. Now let's get busy and peel it off."

As the boys were removing the skin, Charlie remarked on its great thickness.

"I really think a young caribou would have given us more what we want. This hide is frightfully thick, and I'm almost afraid it will not do for snow-shoes," and then after a moment's thought he added: "but I have an idea. You see how the skin is formed at the joints of the hind legs? Why wouldn't it be well to strip the skin off, sew up the lower ends, and then you would have a regular pair of moccasins, they would be fine in snow by using two pairs one inside the other. You could have the hair against your feet and hair outside. What do you think of the idea?"

"Splendid! And this big stag will give a fine pair. By the way, what a beastly smell this beast has, and do you notice how peculiar the meat looks. It's all puffed and unnatural. I don't believe it's fit to eat."

"Nor do I," Charlie agreed; "but what a shame to waste it, for there is such a lot. However, it's no use carting it all the way to camp if we cannot eat it."

"Why not take a small piece back with us and

bury the rest under some moss. We must save all the sinew and gut, as it will come in useful."

The large skin was at last removed, and in it were placed a piece of meat, and the sinews and other parts. This was rolled up and the boys started homeward. They had scarcely emerged from the small barren when they saw three does feeding near by. One of them had unusually large horns, which surprised the boys, who had not realized that caribou does are more often than not, furnished with horns.

"Let's have a try for one of the smaller ones," whispered Jack with his usual hunter's instinct. "Then we can get some better skin for the snowshoes, as well as some good meat."

The suggestion was sound, and they dropped their load of skin and commenced stalking the unsuspecting trio. There was no difficulty in getting within twenty yards of them without being seen.

"Why can't we try for both the smaller ones?" Jack asked.

"No, I think we are more sure if we both try for the same one," Charlie replied who always hated the idea of letting an animal get away wounded.

"It's too good a chance to miss; here, you take the one on your side and I'll tackle the other," argued Jack and as Charlie agreed he added. "Now say when you are ready."

As the signal was given both arrows were released and both animals were hit, but neither appeared any the worse. They were surprised and looked about them to see where the danger came from. The boys remained motionless, and were not seen. Watching for a favourable opportunity, they both reloaded and fired. Jack missed clean, but Charlie made a good shot, though without any visible result, except that the three animals trotted off across the barren, apparently none the worse.

"I guess you were right, Charlie; if we had concentrated our fire we'd probably have got one, and now we have nothing."

"Let's follow them, anyhow!" Charlie replied. "I wouldn't be surprised if one of them dropped before long."

So they picked up their loads and followed the caribou. On reaching the woods at the other side of the barren, the task of following the tracks became more and more difficult. For several hours they succeeded in keeping to them, then they noticed that one animal turned aside while the other kept on.

"Looks to me," said Jack, "as though this one was wounded and not able to stick the pace. I vote we follow it."

They did so, and, after half an hour of very

cautious going, came to the animal standing near some small trees. In order to make sure of their shots, the boys crawled up to within ten yards and from behind the cover of a clump of bushes fired, and the caribou dropped where it stood. It was skinned immediately, and the two boys set off for camp laden down with the two skins and as much meat as they could carry, meaning to return the following day for the rest. They had wandered farther than either had realized, and it was with considerable difficulty that they finally found their way to camp, arriving after dark. A very tired pair they were, yet happy at the results of the day's work. It had been exciting and very successful. Before turning in, the smaller skin was smeared over on the hair side with wood ashes and put into a puddle of water to soak until the hair would slip. The next day, the boys slept late, as they had been thoroughly tired. For breakfast they tried a piece of the old stag but found the meat uneatable.

"We can learn one lesson from this," said Charlie, as he threw the foul-tasting meat away, "and that is to leave the old stags alone during this time of the year at any rate. It seems to me that I can remember Andrew saying something about the stag being uneatable during the mating season, don't you?"

“Yes, and I remember Mr. Pratt saying that it was one of the things about caribou shooting that he so thoroughly disliked. Most of the shooting is done at about this season, and that the killing of the stags was done simply for the horns, and the meat was wasted. We had a long talk about it, and everyone agreed that the best sort of sport was when the need for food was the chief object of the hunt and the trophy was only a secondary object, though most interesting to keep, just as the Indians kept bears’ claws to show as evidence of their skill.”

“Well,” laughed Charlie, “no one will dare to question our sport, for food seems to be very much our reason for shooting. We can’t be accused of useless destruction, as we don’t waste much, do we?”

“We certainly don’t, and I am jolly glad it was not either of us who killed the big stag. When the migration comes, we must be careful to pick out only the young stags and the does that have no fawns if we can.”

After breakfast, an hour or two was devoted to thoroughly cleansing the gut they had brought and stretching the big skin. Then they went back to the barren and tried to find the remains of the second caribou; but though they searched for a long time they could not find it, and in the end

they gave up the search and went to Blueberry Bog for more fruit. During the next four days the boys did various odd jobs, including making two fine new bows which were strung with well-twisted gut. The skin for the snow-shoe webbing was scraped clean of hair and stretched tight to dry. A lot of blueberries were dried, and more salt was made. Then three days were devoted to gathering firewood and stacking up in the shelter all that had previously been collected. The shelter also was enlarged to protect the increased supply. A couple of evening visits were paid to the beaver ponds, and the animals were seen busily at work preparing for the cold weather which was soon to come.

On the thirteenth day of October, the morning broke with a dark, lead-coloured sky. No clouds were visible and the air was very still. Toward noon large flakes of snow fell softly on the ground. More and more thickly they came, and the boys realized that winter was at last coming, and congratulated themselves on having made all their preparations so thoroughly.

"I don't think we shall have much to fear," said Charlie, as he watched the country receiving its mantle of white. "This snow ought to start the migration, and if it does we shall have our hands full getting our winter's meat. Jack, I

wonder how many caribou we shall need. We don't want to kill more than is necessary."

Jack thought a moment, then replied: "It's a jolly hard thing to calculate, but I should think a small caribou would last us about eight or ten days, say a little more than three per month. Allowing for seven or eight months, with what we already have, twenty-five ought to do. It's better to have a few too many than to run the risk of going short, for, after all, the meat is our chief food and during the cold weather our appetites will be larger than they are now. Won't we be sick of the very name of caribou meat before next spring?"

"We will; but remember, we can catch a few hares and perhaps some ptarmigan, and then we have all these smoked salmon; so I expect we shall get along very well. I do wish, however, that we had some flour and baking powder so that we could make slapjacks."

As there seemed to be no chance of the snow stopping for many hours, the afternoon was spent in cutting up the hairless caribou skin into long and very thin strips. These were soaked in water, and, as soon as they were thoroughly pliable, the making of the snow-shoes began. Neither of the boys could remember very clearly what were the details of a proper snow-shoe, but



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Herd of caribou in Newfoundland, during the migration, led as usual by a doe

after many mistakes and a great deal of trouble, they succeeded in making a couple of pairs that, though crude, were still more or less serviceable, and would answer well enough until some better ones could be made.

The next morning was such as one reads of but seldom sees. The ground was covered with several inches of spotless snow, on which a clear cold sun shone with sparkling brilliancy. It had stopped snowing during the night and a sharp frost had followed. The boys were delighted and started immediately after breakfast to see whether the migration had begun. The walking over the rough ground was somewhat hard, but the keen, bracing air made up for it, and they covered the distance at a fair speed. On arriving at Look-out Hill they decided to station themselves for a time on the next peak farther inland, which they named Caribou Hill. From this the leads for many miles could be clearly seen. But no caribou were visible. After waiting an hour or more, Jack suggested that one should go after ptarmigan while the other kept watch. That seemed a good idea, so they drew lots and Jack went. He had been gone about an hour and a half and had killed four birds, when three long whistles sounded in the still air and the hills sent the echoes back and forth.

This was the signal agreed upon, so Jack made all speed to the hill, where he found Charlie very much excited. A long line of perhaps forty caribou were moving at a fast walk along one of the leads that came past the ice-house. They were a long way off, so the boys had plenty of time to reach the lead and select a suitable hiding-place. The wait seemed very long and they were getting chilled through, when round a spur of the hill about two hundred yards away a caribou appeared, followed immediately by another and still others. The leading one was a large hornless doe, and she came along cautiously, looking about, to see that the road was safe. Suddenly she stopped and sniffed the snow, and the whole herd of some twenty or more stopped also and awaited the signal to advance. It did not come. The doe did not like the scent she had found and she turned sharply and trotted off down the hill, taking the herd with her. The boys were greatly disappointed and at first could not understand the reason. Then Charlie remarked:

“What silly asses we are! Don’t you see, we crossed the lead at the place she stopped and then came up here instead of going farther down, so that she found our trail and that gave the show away. Why on earth didn’t we think of

that before? Now we have lost a fine chance just through our stupidity."

"We are a pair of idiots!" Jack replied. "I suppose we were so excited that we didn't think until it was too late. Now don't you think we had better go farther down and keep well on this side?"

This they did at once and selected a place near the spur of the hill. At this point two good trails came together, so they had a double chance. While they were watching, Jack said:

"Has it occurred to you that the herd that came here was not the same one that we saw from the hill? It wasn't half the size. I wonder where the other lot went?"

Scarcely had he said this than in the still air came the sound of clicking hoofs. The boys did not know what it was, but waited anxiously as the sound came nearer. In a few minutes a large herd of caribou were seen approaching, led as before by a doe, for this is the almost inevitable rule with the Newfoundland caribou. In the middle of the long line of silver-coated animals were two large stags with great spreading antlers shining brightly in the cold sunlight. It was a grand sight, and the boys trembled with keen excitement as they watched the herd come nearer and nearer. Soon the leading doe was abreast

of them, and she passed entirely unsuspecting, and the others followed her blindly, full of confidence in the leadership. The boys had their arrows ready, and waited only until two suitable animals were near them. At last a small stag and a very fat doe came along and both arrows were loosed. The distance was only ten or twelve yards, so they could not miss, but neither shot was immediately fatal.

The sound of the flying arrows frightened the herd and they bolted in every direction, some going nearly a hundred yards. Then they stopped and looked about as though not quite sure what next to do. One of the wounded animals was now within twenty yards of the boys, and they both fired again, and had the satisfaction of seeing the caribou run a few yards and drop dead. This caused the others to make another wild dash, and one came very close to the boys, who quickly took advantage of the chance and fired. The animal was struck but rushed away as though unhurt. Then foolishly they moved, and were instantly seen. At the same moment one of the animals that had gone down wind got the scent and gave the signal of alarm, and the whole herd, including the two that were wounded, galloped off. As the boys watched them getting farther and farther away, they saw one animal drop behind and then fall

down and remain absolutely still. They were greatly rejoiced at this, as they hated to see a wounded creature go away to die.

"Come along now, Jack, and we'll get this one skinned and put the meat away, and then go down to the other."

They were quite expert by now in skinning, and the work was done in a very short time. Then the meat was carried up to the ice-house and put safely under the ice. This much done, they were getting the skin rolled up with the marrow, bones, and liver, when a loud snort made them jump. Five caribou had come along the lead and had approached to within forty yards before seeing the boys. The surprise was mutual, but the caribou, not having got the scent, did not recognize the human beings and stood staring in an undecided way.

"Let's have a shot," said Jack; "it's rather far but worth trying."

So they both fired. One shot missed altogether, and the other struck the flank of one of the animals, but, owing to the thickness of the hair, did not penetrate. Curiously enough, even this did not frighten them away and the boys fired again, but with no better results except that one arrow went in and was carried away by the animal, for by this time they had decided to move off.

“It’s really not worth while shooting at long range,” said Jack. “We only lose our arrows. The hair of these animals is getting so very thick that the arrows won’t go in, except at close quarters.”

Having picked up the arrows, they walked over to the caribou that had fallen. This was quickly skinned and cut up; half was taken up to the ice-house and the other half made into a convenient load to be carried home. As they were about to start, they caught sight of an object lying on the snow about three hundred yards away which looked very much like a dead caribou. On the chance that it might be the other wounded beast, they made their way toward it, and sure enough there it was, with the arrow still in its side. They had done well with this herd, having secured no less than three. It was too late to skin this one, so they cleaned it and, after throwing some boughs over it, left it till the next day.

CHAPTER XIV

THEY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CARIBOU MIGRATION TO SECURE THEIR WINTER'S SUPPLY OF MEAT—BAD WEATHER SETS IN—THEY MAKE CARIBOU SKIN CLOTHING AND BETTER SNOW-SHOES—SEE MANY ANIMAL TRACKS IN THE SNOW—FIND THAT SOME ANIMALS AND PTARMIGAN HAVE TURNED WHITE TO MATCH THE SNOW—THEY SET SNARES FOR LYNX AND CATCH ONE—HAVE SERIOUS ENCOUNTER WITH IT—A BLIZZARD—THE AURORA BOREALIS—THEY MAKE FURNITURE—CHRISTMAS COMES AND THEY SURPRISE EACH OTHER—HAVE ELABORATE CHRISTMAS DINNER

THE boys had a very busy week, for the migration was on at full strength. Some days as many as five hundred caribou passed within sight of their hiding-places. Most of them usually went by between eight o'clock in the morning and two in the afternoon. Never had the boys worked so hard. As soon as the main run for the day had gone, the animals that had been shot had to be skinned and cut up. For the present, nearly all the meat was put in the ice-house, only the skins and a small quantity of meat to be smoked was taken to the camp.

It was soon discovered that a lead was made useless after an animal had been killed near it, so fresh positions very frequently had to be taken, it

was also necessary that great attention be paid to the direction of the wind, as it was important that the herds should pass to windward.

At the end of the week, twenty-one caribou had been secured, so the boys were assured of their meat supply for many months to come. The weather had been perfect, cold and generally clear, with occasional snows, and these came usually at night. Everything seemed to have favoured the boys, and fortunately they had taken every possible advantage of the conditions, as the weather changed at the end of the week.

A terrific storm of rain, snow, and biting wind kept them confined to their camp for three long days. During this time they moved into the hut, and a great success it proved; with the exception of having no windows there was no fault to be found with it. The fireplace worked well and the roof was perfectly tight. For a door they had stretched a caribou skin on a wooden frame; the hair was all scraped off and a little grease rubbed in so that as it dried it was almost like parchment and allowed a certain amount of light to get through. The making of windows was one thing that had been entirely overlooked in the building plan, so two openings were cut through the walls, high up where they were thinnest, and these were filled with pieces of rawhide scraped very thin and

treated with a little grease and stretched over wooden frames. The result was fairly satisfactory and a great improvement.

Experiments were made with the acorns which they had collected. A few were roasted and ground fine by pounding between stones. With this rich brown powder a very fair imitation of coffee was made. Of course, it needed milk and sugar, but nevertheless the hot drink was most acceptable.

The boys amused themselves during the hours of enforced confinement making birch-bark cups and wooden spoons and forks; so between one thing and another the time passed and on the fourth day, all traces of the storm were gone, except on the higher hills, which were still covered with snow. After gathering some fresh boughs for bedding, the boys went down to the sea, rebuilt their smoke beacon, and brought back some salt water to keep up the supply of salt. Then a trip to the hills to see if the migration of caribou had entirely passed. Judging from the condition of the leads, a great many had gone by, but with the exception of three or four stragglers, they saw none. A few ptarmigan were secured and some more or less frozen blueberries, which, though soft and somewhat lacking in sweetness, were good enough for present use. The day was still young when they crossed the river near the clam bed, and not-

withstanding the coldness of the water they decided to have a try for pearls. The results were only fairly satisfactory, for no really large ones were found.

The following day, as there was nothing very important to do, they came straight to the river, bringing some lighted punk with which a huge fire was soon made, and then they devoted the whole of the day to pearl hunting. The supply of clams was pretty well exhausted by the time they had finished gathering them, so this would apparently be the last serious attempt they could make in that part of the river, at any rate. The total day's work yielded a fine lot of pearls, including a few very large ones. On the way back to camp several places were tried, but though the clams were fairly abundant, they contained only a very few pearls and they were both small and imperfect, quite different from those found near the white sand.

During the next three weeks the boys were kept indoors a great deal owing to the severity of the weather. At first it rained nearly every day, and the rain froze on the trees and grasses. The effect was beautiful, but far from pleasant. Then the snow began in earnest, and the country was almost completely covered. Sometimes it froze and sometimes there would be a thaw, and the

snow was turned into slush. Nothing could have been worse, and the time hung heavily on the boys' hands. To occupy themselves they made clothes of caribou skin. This work caused them the greatest amusement. It can be readily imagined that the fashions were strictly original, while the fit would scarcely have done credit to a "West End" tailor; but, nevertheless, though neither beautiful nor strictly conventional, they answered the purpose very well. Two suits were made for each, one of brain-tanned skin, with the hair-side in, and one somewhat larger of skin not tanned but rubbed soft at the joints. This had the hair-side out and was supposed to be more or less waterproof. Unfortunately, they found that the hair of most of the skins fell out or broke, but by selecting the earlier skins they succeeded in getting fair results, and the clothes if worn double were warm enough for even the coldest weather.

Their footwear was of the same material, and though, like the clothes, the double skins were bulky, they answered well enough. Caps were made of hare skins, so the boys looked very quaint in their home-made attire. It greatly added to their size, and they looked very much like "woolly bears." All the sewing was done with caribou sinews threaded through holes made with nails. It was exceedingly slow work and

the distance between stitches very variable. What the boys would have done without caribou is hard to say. These animals furnished them with food and clothing and even building material, and the skins made the best of beds. The bear skin was perhaps a trifle more comfortable to sleep on, so each boy took turn in using it for a week at a time, but the caribou skins were made into bags and were very warm. There was one thing which troubled the boys a good deal, that was the lack of soap. During the summer it was well enough. They could use plenty of water and sand, but now that the weather was cold, water had not much attraction. They were discussing the question one evening when Jack said:

“I wonder if we could soften the water with wood ashes?”

“Of course we could,” Charlie replied; “but the lye would make our skin smart, I expect, especially if it were at all chapped. I wish we had kept the fat from that tuna, for I believe if it had been boiled with wood ashes we could have made some sort of soap.”

“For that matter,” Jack answered, “why couldn’t we use some caribou or bear fat, it wouldn’t take much?”

So they tried the experiment of boiling fat in wood-ash lye, and the result was encouraging,

not in appearance but in results, for it really made a sort of dirty-looking soft soap. Fat was too valuable to be used in any quantity for this purpose, and only a very little of the concoction was made.

The middle of November had passed before the weather cleared. Then on the crusted snow the boys tried their snow-shoes. They were familiar with the use of them, having gone on many snow-shoe tramps in Vermont while staying with some relations. In those days they had used well-made shoes, light and properly balanced. Their own home-made attempts were decidedly heavy and dragged too much at the heels. This latter defect was remedied by cutting off a little of the wood, but the weight was a great handicap if they were to attempt any long marches; and that is what they looked forward to doing during the winter. It was decided, therefore, to make some new and much lighter ones. The making of them occupied two days and the results were most gratifying.

One morning toward the end of November the snow was in perfect condition for a tramp so, armed with bows, arrows, and fire sticks, the boys started off to explore the country beyond the ice-house, intending on their way back to bring some of the caribou meat if they had nothing else to

carry. With the new snow-shoes, walking was quite a pleasure, for the snow was firmly packed by the rain and wind of the past weeks and there was a fine soft top dressing which recorded the footsteps of everything that moved.

The boys saw the lace-like tracks of mice, the large padded footprint of the hares, which always look as though the animal were going the wrong way. Here and there near the pools was the unmistakable sign of the muskrat with the deep, wavy cut made by the trailing tail. Once, far up the river, they came to a large and curious track which neither of them could identify. The snow was pressed down in places, apparently by the animal's body, for the short legs had sunk into the soft snow. This was an otter, but they did not know it. Several times they found the dog-like tracks of a fox, and once when they followed these tracks, they were led to the scene of a woodland tragedy and victory—tragedy for the poor hare and victory for the stealthy fox, for he had secured a good dinner.

Weasel or ermine tracks were frequently found, and twice the little animals themselves were seen in their new white winter clothes. Up on the slopes of the hills ptarmigan were found. They, too, were snow-white and not quite so tame as earlier in the year. The boys, however, managed

to shoot a few with arrows. These were used as the stones were hidden beneath the snow. Late in the afternoon they found three caribou on the edge of some woods, but it was time to be returning to camp so they left them undisturbed and made their way back, passing the ice-house from which they took a piece of meat. On their way back they had their first sight of a very large lynx. They both fired but missed it, as might have been expected, as the animal was fully forty yards away.

"How I wish I could remember how a dead-fall is made so that we might trap him," said Jack. "Do you suppose if we made a very large, strong snare it would work?"

"It's worth trying, I think, but I haven't much faith, as these lynx are very strong," Charlie replied. "Let's make a couple to-night and set them to-morrow with a piece of caribou meat as bait."

So that night, as soon as they got back to camp, they made three strong snares, using rawhide for the thongs. Next morning they went out and set them under the shelter of an overhanging spruce branch, under which the meat was concealed. The three snares were arranged so that the boys thought the animal would have little chance of getting the meat without going into one of them.

They also set half a dozen snares for hares in runways.

When they visited the traps the following morning, the caribou meat was gone. They found a part of a hare in a snare; from the wing tracks in the snow they concluded an owl had stolen it. In one of the other snares was a dead hare which had not been touched. They cut this in halves and used the head and shoulders for bait. On examining the tracks made by the lynx, they saw that it had passed quite close to one of the snares and had come back the same way, so they closed every approach to the meat with dead wood, leaving only two narrow ways, in one of which two snares were set and one in the other. This they thought would surely work.

Early next day they went to see what the results might be, and approached the place, filled with excitement. The sight which met their eyes showed that something had happened, for the snow was all broken with tracks and strewn with scraped bark; branches were torn off and the whole place showed evidence of a severe struggle. Two of the snares had vanished, so the boys followed the footprints and what looked like the trail of a branch dragged through the snow. For several hundred yards the tracks led through the woods, twisting about in a most erratic way. Here



“Their presence infuriated the animal still more, and it made a sudden spring at Jack”

and there the animal had apparently sat down and tried to free itself from the branch, and once it had tried to crawl inside a hollow log, but without success.

At last, in a very thick place in the woods, the lynx was found, and a very strange picture it presented: one snare was around its neck also holding a fore foot, the other snare was tight round a hind leg. In its rage the animal had torn from the tree the branch to which the snare had been fastened. The whole thing was a remarkable tangle from which the lynx had tried to escape in vain, and the animal was the very picture of impotent rage as it lay there snarling and struggling. The common Newfoundland name of Lucifer (properly Loup Cervier) seemed to fit it perfectly. As the boys approached to within a few yards, their presence infuriated the animal still more, and it made a sudden spring at Jack, who was taken by surprise, and before he realized what had happened, he felt the impact of the heavy body striking him with considerable force and the sharp claws tearing at his caribou skin clothes.

Unfortunately he had put out his hands to ward off the attack, and the lynx seized one with its sharp teeth. Luckily the weight of the branch had handicapped the creature in its spring, other-

wise the situation would have been far more serious. As it was, it was bad enough, and Charlie, rushing to the rescue, scarcely knew what to do. At first, he seized the branch to which the snare was fastened and tried to drag the animal away, but Jack cried out:

“Let go, let go, he’s pulling my hand to pieces.”

So Charlie, being unable to strike for fear of hurting Jack, made a frantic grab at the lynx’s neck and closed his hands as tight as he could around its throat, hoping to strangle it. For some time this had no effect, but at last a gurgling sound showed that he was winning and the jaws relaxed their hold. At the same moment it started to tear at Charlie’s hand with its free hind leg. Not daring to let go, Charlie fell on the animal and with Jack’s help succeeded finally in killing it. Panting from the exertion, the boys surveyed their wounds. Both had suffered severely and the snow was stained with their blood. Taking up some clean snow, they carefully wiped their hands and were surprised to find how badly they had been scratched and torn.

“Won’t it be nice if blood poison sets in?” said Jack. “That would be a fine ending to our adventures, wouldn’t it?”

“What shall we do, Jack? I suppose a good washing with boiled water would be the best thing

and we ought to do it soon. I say, did you ever see such a brute as that lynx? The way he went for you was frightful, it was such a surprise. Jolly lucky he didn't catch your face!"

"Wasn't it? You know, I never dreamed of his coming. How in the world he managed to spring so quickly with all that rubbish hanging to him is what puzzles me. It's just as well he was fairly tired after the long walk and his efforts in trying to get clear. If he had been quite fresh, he'd have given us a jolly sight worse time of it, and it was quite bad enough as it was. I feel rather done up, don't you?"

"Yes," Charlie replied, "I do. Let's take the brute along and get back to camp."

The boys were astonished at the animal's weight.

"I had no idea they were so heavy," Jack said as he lifted it. "Why, I'll bet it weighs nearly fifty pounds."

"I expect it does, and isn't it a splendid skin? Surely it's much darker than those mounted specimens we saw in the Adirondacks and it's certainly very much larger. I vote we pull the skin off here. There's no use in carting this weight all the way to camp."

So they rough skinned their hard-won prize and made their way back to camp, where, after thor-

oughly washing their wounds with boiled water, to which a little salt had been added, they took things easy for a while. Jack's hand was very troublesome the following day; it was badly swollen and much inflamed, and for a time it looked as though blood poison might set in. However, in three or four days it began to get better, and thanks to the boy's healthy physical condition he was able to use it by the end of a week.

"The next time we catch a lynx, I think we'll know enough to keep at a respectful distance until it's stone dead," Jack remarked one day, as he lay watching Charlie cleaning the skin and getting it ready for brain tanning.

During the first half of December the weather was fine and unusually mild so that most of the snow melted. The boys took advantage of the opportunity to add to their supply of fuel and to snare a number of hares. They also brought down some caribou meat from the ice-house. A few trips were made to the beaver ponds and several times the animals were seen at work, both cutting down trees and storing their winter's supply of wood. The boys were greatly surprised at the size of these wood piles, also at the thorough coating of mud with which the lodges were plastered.

Gradually the weather changed, the nights

became bitterly cold, all ponds were frozen solid, and the streams and rivers were bordered with glistening ice. Frequent flurries of snow gave warning that winter, the real, relentless winter of the north, was near, and one morning the boys awoke to find a blizzard raging. The screeching wind carried the snow past with bewildering speed, and the trees bent their heads and trembled; weak branches were torn away and hurled to the snow-covered ground. No sign of any living creature was to be seen, for nothing could live in the fury of the gale unless in the shelter of the thickest forest. The two looked out from the well-built hut and congratulated themselves on being so comfortably housed, while they wondered what the country would be like when the storm ended.

For three days and nights the wind took no rest. It banked the snow in deep drifts on the north side of the woods and carried it over the barrens to a depth of nearly three feet. Up in the hills the weather sides were blown almost bare, while every valley and rift was filled, and in many cases the inequalities of the ground were completely obliterated. Then at the end of the three days the storm spent itself, and a deadly calm prevailed. The sky was dark and cloudless, a sodden gray. The cold was intense, and the

boys came forth on snow-shoes to find that their hut was almost hidden in the general whiteness. From the chimney rose a column of blue smoke which was the only moving thing, the only thing that showed a sign of life. The day was so gloomy and foreboding that the boys were glad to get back into the cozy, fire-lighted hut, for they feared that more snow was yet to come.

Night came on almost unnoticed, for in the snow-covered land the night is luminous and never dark. Before turning in, Charlie took a look out of doors to see whether the expected snow had begun, and was surprised to find that the sky had cleared. Strange, uncanny lights danced in the heavens, shivering shafts of yellow and pink darted across in a bewildering way. At first Charlie could not understand what was happening, then suddenly he realized that it was the mysterious Aurora Borealis, so well named the Northern Lights, and he called Jack out to see the wonderful sight.

For some days after this the boys contented themselves with work about the camp, making chairs out of saplings, with caribou skin seats, then a table of very primitive construction; they could not afford to use for furniture making the few nails that remained from the wreck of the launch so everything had to be fastened together with wooden pegs and rawhide thongs. Needless

to say there were many failures in the work, but with patience and plenty of time at their disposal, the final results were quite satisfactory. The table was made of a framework of thin birch saplings properly braced; for the top a piece of rawhide was stretched over a support of strips of wood trimmed flat on the upper side. Wooden cups and plates were made to replace the frail bark utensils.

All these jobs occupied the time, so that the days passed only too quickly. Jack realized one evening after consulting the tally stick that it was the 23rd of December. The next day would be Christmas Eve. Curiously enough, the same thought had come to Charlie, and he wondered how he could surprise Jack, while Jack in turn wondered how he could surprise Charlie. Neither mentioned the word Christmas, but both determined to make the day noticeable. It had been the rule ever since they were wrecked that they should keep together as much as possible for fear of accidents, but the next morning Jack remarked that he would like to see the beaver houses and that he would be back soon. This suited Charlie very well, for he had been wondering how he would be able to get off by himself, so he raised no objection to Jack's going.

"How long will you be?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know; but don't worry about me, as I may find something to interest me and if so I'll not hurry back. What are you going to do?"

"I think I'll take a walk around camp and see what's happening," Charlie replied.

As soon as Jack was clear of camp he turned off the trail which led to the ponds and travelled as fast as he could over the deep snow for the ice-house, determined to get some ptarmigan out of storage for the Christmas dinner. On his way he had the good luck to shoot a fine hare. This gave him an idea. He would tan the skin and make a cap for Charlie as a Christmas present. So in order to save time, he skinned the animal there and then and worked the brains in as he walked along. By the time he reached the ice cave the skin was quite dry and soft. After selecting a couple of cold-storage ptarmigan, he headed back toward camp, but on the way he stopped in a sheltered nook, for the day was fine and the sun was shining with an attempt at warmth. He cut out the hare skin into the proper shape for a cap. In his pocket he had some bits of sinew which were always carried in case of emergency, and sitting on a bunch of fir branches he completed the cap. Hiding it carefully in his clothes, he continued his walk and reached camp before the sun had set. Charlie greeted him with:

"By Jove, you must have found those beaver lodges uncommonly interesting. Do you know, you've been away all day, and I was getting frightfully worried; thought you'd got lost and I should become a new kind of Robinson Crusoe, a frozen one with no man Friday."

"Oh, I expect you thought I had followed the example of that chap in Hiawatha, what was his name? Pau-Puk-Keewis, wasn't it?—and gone to dwell with Ahmeek in the beaver lodges. Well, to tell the truth, I changed my mind after starting and took a walk up toward the hills, and on my way shot this hare, which will taste pretty good, I'm thinking. By the way, is grub nearly ready? I'm famished."

"No, Jack, I'm sorry it is not, for I, too, went for a walk and have not been back long. Isn't this snow fine! It's a positive joy to travel over it. How do you find your snow-shoes work? Mine are splendid."

"So are mine, couldn't be better; but come along and let's get something to eat."

Charlie had spent a very busy day. He had decided to make a very fine bow as a present for Jack and had worked hard to complete it. The result was highly satisfactory. Not only had he found an excellent piece of wood, but he had ornamented it with burnt work, so that it was

really quite handsome. He had also gathered greens with which he proposed to decorate the hut. These were hidden under some skins so that Jack did not see them. After supper the boys turned in, and as soon as Jack was sound asleep, Charlie crept out of his sleeping bag and, without making any noise, he hung the greens all about the hut with delightful effect. Then he made a Christmas card out of a piece of birch bark, on which he drew a picture with a red-hot nail. This he fastened to the bow and laid it near the fireplace. Much pleased with his efforts, he got back into his bed and was soon fast asleep.

Early in the morning he was surprised by Jack, who awoke him shouting:

“A Merry Christmas, Charlie, old man.” In the dim light Jack had not noticed the decorated hut, so Charlie after returning the greeting remarked that he was greatly astonished to know that it was really Christmas. Then he got up and threw some bark on the fire and lighted up the hut. Jack rubbed his eyes in bewilderment as he looked about and saw the hut’s transformation.

“You rascal! when in the world did you do all that?” he cried; “and what’s this?” (as he took up the well-made bow and the card.) “Oh, I say, Charlie, this is good of you. It is a beauty!”

Just then Charlie noticed on the table a package

done up in bark and addressed to him in charcoal. It was the cap, and he was of course delighted with it.

"Rather funny," he said, "that we should both have remembered the day and said nothing about it. It's been a regular double surprise. Wouldn't the family be amused if they could see us."

"They surely would. I say, what shall we have for our Christmas dinner. I brought a couple of ptarmigan down yesterday, so they'll do for the turkey, and we can have a bit of salmon, and for sweets we can open one of the emergency rations tins and get some chocolate and biscuits. We must make the best attempt we can at a spread."

During the morning the boys enjoyed a brisk walk over the firm snow to give themselves a good appetite, as they said; then about three o'clock preparations were made for dinner. A menu written on birch bark was made, as follows: Broiled smoked salmon; roast ptarmigan with roast spatterdock; nut chocolate and biscuits; blueberries; acorn coffee. The table was well decorated with greens, so that everything had quite an air of Christmas. The dinner proved a great success and the family health was drunk in the acorn coffee.

CHAPTER XV

THEY GO FOR A LONG TRIP INLAND—SEE A SILVER FOX;—GET CAUGHT IN A TERRIBLE BLIZZARD—FIND A TRAPPER'S HUT IN WHICH IS THE SKELETON OF THE OWNER—GET SUPPLY OF FLOUR AND OTHER LUXURIES—FIND VALUABLE SKINS—THE BLIZZARD ENDS SO THEY MAKE THEIR WAY BACK TO BEAVER STREAM CAMP—THEY TRAP SILVER FOXES—SPRING COMES—THEY SEE YOUNG BEAVER—FIND WHERE THE GULLS HAVE NESTS—MAKE A BOAT AND COLLECT EGGS—ARE CAPSIZED IN POND—MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR ANOTHER WINTER—MOVE CAMP TO COAST—A BIG STORM COMES

THE following morning plans and arrangements were made for a trip up country; the snow was in perfect condition and the weather seemed favourable, so they decided to go for several days in order that they might explore the region more thoroughly than they had hitherto been able to do. The sleeping bags were made into packs and enough food was taken to last three or four days. Fire sticks and punk, and fragments from mice's nests, as this makes the best tinder, bows and arrows, completed their equipment, and they started about ten o'clock. The idea was to go to the north of Look-out Hill, then swing round in a large circle to the south and back to the river

near the sandy reach. The first day's tramp proved uneventful but nevertheless delightful.

The dry, firm snow made walking easy; all ponds were frozen over and covered with deep snow, so that they were scarcely distinguishable from the dry land. In some of the ponds the travellers found beaver lodges; these were mere mounds of snow from which a slight film of steam arose through the chimneys. On tapping the sides a faint whining sound could be heard, as though puppies inhabited the well-built houses. Throughout the country there was very little sign of life. One lonely caribou was seen dressed in its winter suit of white, so that it was scarcely visible, a few hares, an ermine or weasel, half a dozen white ptarmigan, some Canada jays, a large white owl, and a couple of glossy black ravens were the only living things observed during the day.

Toward evening camp was made. It was a simple affair consisting of a lean-to of boughs covered with snow, a deep bed of boughs, and a roaring fire. In spite of the intense cold, the boys slept soundly, waking only when the fire burned low and had to be replenished with wood. The next morning, after a hot breakfast of toasted strips of venison, the journey was resumed. Their way took them over ranges of high hills from which splendid views of the country were obtained. The

views, though exceedingly beautiful, were very lonely. No sign of human habitation could be seen as far as the eye could reach. To the north and south and east it was hills and more hills, all snow-covered except where it had been blown away from smooth-faced rocks. Here and there a dark patch of woods crept up the valleys like an army trying to conquer the snowbound heights. To the west and southwest the land was undulating, barrens and woods being about evenly distributed, and farther off was the sea, cold and gray, with its fringe of waves spending themselves against the rocky coast. A short halt was made toward noon and some cold meat eaten. While they were resting Jack caught sight of a small animal making its way over the snow.

“What do you suppose that can be, Charlie? It looks almost like a dog.”

Charlie examined it carefully for a few minutes, and then said: “It’s a fox, I believe; but what a queer colour, it looks quite black. Let’s get our bows ready, for it is evidently coming this way. Don’t move.”

The boys crouched low, and their whitish caribou clothes made them look like anything but human beings. On came the fox, trotting slowly directly toward the silent, crouching figures. When it got to within thirty or forty yards it

stopped, as though it had smelt some strange scent. While it stood still, with nose pointing to the wind, the boys fired. But the target was small and the arrows missed. The fox hearing the tang of the bowstring took one look at the boys, then turned and trotted away.

"Do you realize that it was a silver fox," said Charlie, "and worth perhaps hundreds and hundreds of dollars?"

"Of course, I do," Jack replied, "that's why I missed. I was so excited, I couldn't shoot straight. What a chance! and to think we both should have missed. If it had been some rotten old hare, we'd probably have hit it. Oh, well, never mind. Let's go and see if we can find the arrows."

The finding of them was no easy task, as they were buried deep in the snow, but after some digging they were finally recovered, and the journey continued in a southerly direction till evening, when camp was made in a thick patch of woods down in a narrow, sheltered valley. As the boys sat by the fire, they were much struck by the curious effect in the sky. Around the pale moon was a double halo, one small and one very large, and coloured almost like a faded rainbow. The sky was covered with a thin film of drifting haze.

"I believe that's a sign of bad weather," Jack remarked, as he looked at it.

"I wouldn't be surprised at all," Charlie replied. "There is a queer feeling in the air; and do you remember how the ravens croaked all this afternoon? By Jove, I hope we are not in for another blizzard. It would be awkward for us."

The air was strangely still. In the woods an owl called out in dismal, hollow tones his queer *hoo-hoo-hoo-hooo*, which sounded to the boys as though he was saying, "Who, who are you?" Farther away several other owls repeated the same question. From the bleak hills above came the distant barking of a fox, as though he, too, felt that things were not quite right. The boys felt nervous, and had a foreboding that trouble was coming.

Toward midnight the moon was hidden by a cloud, and through the woods the slowly rising wind moaned dismally. Later fitful gusts changed the moans to shrieks, and the boys knew that a storm was coming, and coming soon. To return home was the only chance of escape, so they rose long before the first glint of daylight and cooked all their remaining meat. After eating a substantial meal they started northward, keeping on the western slopes of the hills where the walking was best. Scarcely had they started than fine, sharp snow began to blow past them and the cold became intense. Thicker and thicker came the white

19 XMAS 14

DINNER

Broiled
Smoked Salmon

Roast Parmigan

Roast ^{with} Spatterdock

Nut Chocolate &

Biscuits

Blueberries

Acorn Coffee



The birch bark menu

storm, so that they could scarcely see which way to go, for the snow struck their faces with such force that they could not open their eyes.

Hardly knowing which way they were going, they kept on, stumbling over snow-covered obstacles and lurching against each other, for they realized the importance of keeping very close together. After several hours the strain began to tell on them and they stopped to rest in the comparative shelter of some woods. Here they were able to speak and be heard, so they discussed the situation and it seemed very hopeless. To begin with, they could not know whether they were going toward camp, for the snow obliterated everything from sight; objects, except those more than a few yards away, were completely lost. Then the cold was terrible, and in spite of the thickness of their clothing the boys felt that they could not stand it very long. To light a fire, under the conditions, was almost if not quite impossible, as their hands would be numbed instantly if the heavy mits were removed. Fortunately, they had cooked enough food to keep them from starvation, but even food will not keep one alive without heat and rest, and of course rest for more than a few minutes at a time was out of the question. Should the storm last several days, there would be very little chance of living through it unless they were

lucky enough to strike camp, and that was scarcely likely. The only guide they had was the wind, and though by facing that they could rely on not going in small circles, they had no way of knowing whether the wind changed direction, as it might easily do.

They decided to push along in the direction in which they believed the camp to be, and started again with their fur caps well pulled down to protect their faces. On and on they went, getting more and more weary and miserable. Night came on and still they must keep moving. An occasional stop for a few minutes to munch a piece of frozen meat was all they dared allow themselves. Cold, sleepy, and exhausted, they dragged the heavy snow-shoes over the drifting snow until it seemed as though they could go no farther, and still they *must* go on. Each took his turn in breaking the way, and silently the leadership was exchanged as the strain for the one became too great. Had either one been alone, he would gladly have lain down to sleep and die in the soft snow, but so long as one moved the other must do the same.

All night they fought to live, fought against the storm which increased in fury as the night wore on, until it seemed as though the wind had reached its utmost strength only to gather

still greater power. The endurance of the two boys had its limits; halts were made with ever-increasing frequency, and with each halt the start became more and more difficult. Not a word was spoken. They dared not even look each other in the face for fear of showing the weakening of the spirit. Their very minds were numb with cold and pain, and yet they fought their way along, unwilling to give up hope so long as they could induce their legs to move. Daylight came at last, so gradually that it was scarcely noticed. For more than twenty-four hours had the two boys battled bravely against the terrible odds, and still no goal was in sight, no goal but Death, which stared them in the face. Progress became slower and slower, more painful and more laboured. Hope, which had kept them going so long, was nearly dead when they stopped to breathe and rest and try to eat on the sheltered side of a thick wood.

They were leaning against the bent branches of a fir when suddenly Charlie grasped Jack's arm and pointed to an old "blaze" on the side of a large spruce. It was the very first sign of a human being they had seen on land since they had been thrown ashore nearly half a year ago. The blaze had been made by an axe. It was covered with dull yellow gum and the bark had grown over

the edges, so that it was evidently several years old. What did it mean? Were they near a human habitation after all, or had some wanderer left the sign for his own use and information?

The sight gave new life to the boys, and they hurried forward as fast as the stiffness of their limbs would allow, to see whether perhaps there were other blazes. Soon they found another and yet another, and then, they could scarcely believe their eyes, a tiny log hut showed itself above the deepening snow. The roof as far as could be seen was somewhat dilapidated, but still it held together and covered the walls.

With feverish excitement the boys made their way to the door; apparently it was fastened on the inside, but not very securely, for it broke open when they threw their weight against it. As their eyes became accustomed to the dim light a strange sight was disclosed. On a rude bed lay the remains of an old man partly covered with a mouse-eaten blanket. Only the skeleton occupied the remnants of the clothes, and the empty eye sockets stared at the astonished boys in a ghastly way. Near the bed was a rusty tin kettle and a cup, in which was the black dust of tea leaves, the old man's last beverage. In one corner of the room was a pile of dry firewood; there were also two barrels, one of which was unopened. On a small,

rough shelf were several tins, whose labels were obliterated by rust. There were also a few steel traps, and from a rafter hung a bundle of furs. Beyond these things there were a few old cooking utensils, and near the wood lay what delighted the boys, an axe. It was rusty and dull, but that soon could be remedied. In one corner they also found the remains of an old double-barrelled shotgun, rusted beyond repair. For some time the boys gazed about the poorly-lighted hut without saying much. To be out of the clutches of the storm was a relief for which they were thankful, but to find themselves in the company of the dead was gruesome, and in their weakened condition it made a great impression. Tears came to Charlie's eyes and he swallowed hard as he said in a low, sobbing voice:

"What shall we do? We can't stay here with that," pointing to the bed. Jack shivered as he replied:

"Why not let us carry it out and lay it on the snow for the present?—then we can light a fire and get thawed out. I feel actually sick with cold and fatigue. Come on, let's move it. Poor old chap, what a doleful end. Think of dying out here all alone, and no one to give him a thing at the end!"

The two boys stood looking down at the pathetic

mortal remains of the old trapper, and trying to muster their courage to take hold of it. An idea suddenly came to Charlie.

“Do you remember, Jack, what Andrew told us of his two old cousins who went off for silver foxes, and how one was found dead in a river and no one knew what had become of the other? I’ll bet this is the poor old fellow. From the look of things, I should say he died of cold. The fire evidently burnt out and he could not get up to make it again.”

“You’re right,” Jack replied. “But what an extraordinary thing that we should have come across him, and all on account of the blizzard. It only shows how things work out for the best even when we think everything is going wrong.”

Feeling that they knew something about the unfortunate old man made it easier for them to undertake the task of carrying the remains out of the hut, which they at once proceeded to do. Then, with a sense of relief, they turned to the fire and were about to use their fire bow and stick when they noticed some old sulphur matches on the table. These apparently were none the worse for age, and one was soon struck. In a few minutes the fire was roaring up the long disused and badly rusted chimney-pipe, and the boys were sitting in front of it enjoying the much-needed

warmth. They did not realize how tired they were, and sleep came to them as they sat there.

Not until the fire began to die down and the hut grow cold did they awake. More fuel was put on, and they opened up their sleeping bags and made themselves more or less comfortable, and soon drifted to the mists of dreamland, where skeletons and blizzards danced together without disturbing them. For several hours they were completely lost to the world, and then they awoke feeling refreshed, and mighty hungry. After eating some toasted venison they took a more careful look about the hut. In the opened barrel was the remainder of flour mixed with the remains of mice, which had got in and had been unable to get out again. The second barrel contained flour and seemed to be perfectly sound. They also found sugar, baking-powder, tea, salt, and matches. The bundle of skins contained twenty-seven foxes, twelve of which were silvers, several otter, ermine, and lynx. These having been hung from the ceiling had escaped the attacks of mice, and most of them were in good condition.

"They are worth a small fortune," said Jack, as he sorted them out.

"Very well, you can have them, but I prefer the flour and sugar, to say nothing of the axe," Charlie answered. "Do you realize we shall live

in luxury now; and I'll tell you what would be a good scheme. We'll try to trap some silver foxes. A little grease on these traps will put them in order, and we might get some valuable skins. Between the skins and the pearls, we'll be quite rich when we leave here, and this lot of skins we'll send to the old man's family. Won't they be surprised. These twelve alone ought to be worth two or three thousand dollars, and that's a lot up in this country."

"Which country?" Jack asked, laughing. "Personally, I don't think a million dollars is worth much up here; we certainly cannot spend it; but still, as these silver foxes seem to be fairly common here, I quite agree with you that we ought to try to catch some, so that if we ever get away we'll have them to sell."

Evening came, with no sign of the blizzard ending. All night it continued its fury, and in the morning the boys found that the snow had piled up to the top of the door, and they had to dig an opening in order to see what the weather was doing. It was snowing a little and the wind was evidently dying down, so they made a passage out from the hut and had a look about.

The sky was still dull gray, and the boys were not at all sure the storm had entirely passed so they decided to stay in the hut for the day and

amused themselves with making slapjacks. As it was months since last they had tasted flour, except the few emergency biscuits, they were not over particular, and they smacked their lips over the cakes made of baking powder, flour, and sugar which were badly fried in the very rusty frying-pan with a little venison grease.

Several times during the day the storm renewed its efforts, but finally toward evening the snow and the wind stopped. The dull gray sky broke, and through the rift a yellow sun shone upon the snow-bound land. It was a hopeful sign, and the boys went to sleep feeling sure that the morrow would be fine. They were not disappointed, for the day dawned with a clear, cloudless sky. So still was the air that not a leaf stirred. What a contrast to the preceding days of storm and tumult, when all the furies of Nature were let loose, and now absolute peace reigned. Not a sound disturbed the stillness except the occasional soft notes of some wandering chickadees or the cry of the Canada jay, who was busy searching for food in his store-houses among the trees. He must have blessed his foresight in having tucked away berries, meat, and other delicacies in the fold of the birch bark or among the gray moss which clung to the firs; otherwise he might have gone hungry, and hunger and cold do not go well together.

The boys were confronted with the difficulty of finding their way back to camp and still leaving a trail so that they could return to the trapper's hut. Fortunately they had the axe, and though it was rusted and blunt, they succeeded in sharpening it well enough to enable them to blaze the trees. Before leaving the hut they packed up some flour, matches, sugar, and baking powder, also the frying-pan and the bundle of dried skins, and with these they started. The very deep wind-packed snow made walking fairly easy, thanks to their snow-shoes.

After getting clear of the woods, through which they blazed a trail as they went along, the country appeared somewhat familiar, particularly the range of hills to their right. At the end of five hours of walking Look-out Hill was clearly seen, only a few miles away. They were delighted to find themselves so near home and were surprised to know that the trapper's hut was really not more than about four hours' direct walk from their camp, as, now that the river was frozen over, they could cross it at any point. On arriving at the camp, the hut was found to be almost completely covered with snow which had drifted against the walls, so that only about a foot remained visible. After considerable difficulty a way into the door was cleared and another to

the wood-shed, so that fuel could be secured, and a good fire soon took away the vault-like feeling of the house.

During the evening the boys decided that they would move the following day over to the trapper's camp for a week or so and have a try at trapping silver foxes. It was only necessary to take a supply of meat and their sleeping bags; so immediately after breakfast they started and had no difficulty in finding the hut. As soon as a fire had been started, some boughs were collected for beds and a supply of wood cut. Then the traps were taken out and set in what seemed to be likely places, scraps of caribou being used for bait. From the number of tracks in the new snow there was every reason to expect good luck. The next morning the boys could scarcely wait to finish breakfast, so anxious were they to visit the line. Their delight may be easily understood when in the third trap a splendid silver fox was found. And this was only the beginning of their good fortune, for at the end of a month they had caught no less than eighteen foxes, eight of which were silvers. This seemed to exhaust the supply of the neighbourhood, for during the following two weeks they caught nothing and saw no fox tracks.

During these weeks they had paid many visits to Beaver Stream Camp and had also taken some long

walks over the hills. It was past the middle of February when they concluded to try a new place for trapping. In the course of one of their walks a valley was found which appeared to be a regular home for foxes, as the tracks were everywhere to be seen. This valley was not more than three miles from Look-out Hill, so the boys used their own camp as a base and visited the new line of traps every day or two. The results were fairly successful so far as numbers went, thirteen foxes being taken, but only two were silvers and four crosses, that is to say part silvers; also a fine lynx was caught. By the end of March the trapping was abandoned, as the weather was thoroughly bad and the walking very difficult.

During April they found the time hang heavy on their hands, as they were confined to camp a great deal. They amused themselves making two suits of buckskin clothes and moccasins, to be used when the weather became warm.

Signs of spring were becoming more and more evident as the weeks passed. Heavy rains took the place of snow, though occasionally a snow storm would remind them that they were in the far north where spring comes late. The hares were seen to be losing their white coats and the ptarmigan were getting mottled in colour. With the thawing of the snow and ice the rivers became rushing torrents

carrying the great masses of ice down with a deafening roar, tearing trees away from the banks, and moving great boulders. The boys had never seen anything like it. With the coming of May most of the snow vanished, leaving irregular masses here and there, so that the country was a strange patchwork of colour and white. The higher hills still retained their covering of snow until the end of May, by which time all signs of winter had vanished. Many birds were returning after their winter in the sunny south, and the whole land was filled with the promise of spring.

One warm day, after the ground had thawed, a trip was made to the trapper's hut for the purpose of burying the remains of the poor old man. A shallow grave was dug and a slab cut for a headstone, with the simple inscription burnt into it:

"Here lies an old trapper found by Charles Mason and Jack Sylvester in hut during winter and buried in June, 1915."

It was fortunate that the boys had laid in such good supplies of food, as the country furnished them with very little during this season. With the exception of hares and ptarmigan the only thing they could obtain was maple syrup, the collecting of which occupied much of their spare time. They had frequently seen it done at home, so they succeeded with little difficulty in tapping

the trees and getting a fair amount of sap. This they boiled down to a thick syrup, which made a very welcome addition to their food and made the simple slapjacks taste better than ever. The supply of blueberries was not yet exhausted, but they had lost much of their sweetness and were very soft. Those stored in the ice-house had not kept much better than the ones under water, which had a peculiar peaty flavour and would apparently not keep much longer, therefore the boys decided to boil some of the best berries with sugar, so as to have some fruit to keep them going. The acorn coffee was entirely finished, so was the smoked salmon. One tin of cooked bake apples still remained, and this was reboiled with some sugar in order to make it keep better.

The caribou meat in the ice-house was in first-rate condition, and there was every reason to believe it would be fit for use as long as it lasted. The returning spring migration of the caribou was nearly passed. Unlike the autumn one, the animals come singly, in pairs, and occasionally small herds of stags. They travelled in a leisurely way, and were a hornless and ragged-looking lot. Their heavy whitish winter coat was falling in patches, giving way to the gray of summer. No longer were the animals sleek and fat. The long winter had not been a season of plenty as was evidenced by the

conspicuous display of ribs. The boys, thinking it advisable to have some fresh smoked venison, shot a couple of the fattest they could find, and put all the meat in the smoke-house.

"Let's have a try for a trout," said Jack one evening. "A taste of fresh fish would be a jolly good change, what do you say?"

Charlie agreed, and they took some of their carefully kept flies and hooks and went down to the river. The trout were not at all interested in the flies, but quite appreciated the fat white grubs which the boys found in the bark of a dead tree. Enough were caught to furnish several meals, and the fresh fish were greatly relished.

One day the boys walked up to the beaver ponds to see what was happening to the little engineers. They were somewhat surprised to see how much activity the pond presented. A number of ducks were playing about, a pair of large blue herons were searching for food along the edge of the water. On a grassy point of land were a whole family of young beaver and one old one enjoying a sun bath and romping about like a lot of kittens. Every once in a while the youngsters would make a dash for the water and play about in a most amusing way, pushing one another off logs or stones, and generally enjoying themselves very thoroughly. The boys were so inter-

ested in the picture that they lay hidden behind a large fallen tree, and for a long time watched the antics of the various creatures, among which were a number of muskrats; these were about the size of the young beaver. Suddenly the peaceful picture was rudely disturbed. A goshawk appeared, flying low over the tops of the trees. Warning of danger was given by some jays, and instantly every animal sought the protection of the water, every animal except one—a small beaver that apparently thought the general rush to the water was part of a game, and he hesitated only for a moment, but it was almost long enough to prove fatal, for the hawk swooped down on the little fellow, who fortunately made a dive just in time to escape, and the hawk flew away to find some easier prey. For fully half an hour the pond was very quiet, but slowly the animals returned to their games and the boys watched until the sky became tinged with a golden glow, which warned them that it was time to go back to camp. During the afternoon a number of gulls had been seen flying inland. This gave Charlie an idea, and he suggested that it would be well to find out where they were going.

“They have probably ‘got’ nests somewhere near by and their eggs would be delicious eating,” he said.



“Progress became slower and slower, more painful and more laboured”

So the following morning they went in to the barren, and sure enough the gulls were there, but in a most inaccessible place—on an island in the middle of a large pond.

“If only we had a boat,” Jack remarked, “we should be able to get all the eggs we want.”

“Well, why not make one? There is plenty of birch bark, and it is easily peeled now,” Charlie replied.

“Or better still,” said Jack, “let’s make a skin coracle. It would be much easier and would not take nearly so long. The eggs would all be hatched before we could finish a bark boat, while the coracle could be done in a few hours. All we need is a few strips of light wood which can be easily split now we have an axe, and then the caribou skins can be thoroughly soaked and stretched over the framework. It needn’t be very large.”

The skins were put in soak as soon as they reached camp, and the next morning they were up very early much interested and excited at the work before them. The wood was quickly secured and one piece bent into an elliptical form. Then ribs were fastened to it with rawhide, another thin strip was laid lengthways to prevent the ribs moving. Then the skins were scraped clean of hair and the two edges rolled together

so that the ridge thus formed went along the keel. To prevent this coming undone a thin strip of wood was attached on the outside. As soon as this was accomplished the skins were stretched tightly over the sides, lapping over the gunwale. The result was most satisfactory, and when the skins dried the coracle was very light.

“What about a flooring?” Jack asked, as he contemplated the frail craft. “Our feet would push the skin out of shape if we stood on it.”

Charlie thought a moment, then replied: “Why not make a floor of bark? It would be light and quite strong, and will not take a moment to do.”

A piece of bark was quickly peeled from a near-by tree and fastened into position. By the time the work was finished it was too late to try the boat, so they made a couple of paddles and then had supper and turned in. With the first gleam of daylight they were up, and after a hasty breakfast they started off, carrying the coracle. On reaching the gull pond the boat was put in the water. To the delight of the boys it floated very well, though slightly lopsided. The next thing was to get into the buoyant craft. This was no easy matter, as she objected to staying still, but moved away as soon as touched. At last, after many attempts, Jack embarked and sat down. This made the boat more steady, and Charlie got

in without much trouble. Then they pushed off and paddled away from the shore. The boat carried them well but was most erratic, turning about like a tub, so that great care was necessary to gain a given point.

However, after meandering about in every direction they finally reached the island over which the gulls hovered, screaming their objection at the boat's approach. So interested were the boys in watching the birds that they bumped into a tussock, and the next moment they found themselves floundering in the water while their coracle lay bottom up. The water was shallow, but the bottom was of soft, peaty substance that offered no foothold. There was nothing for it but to swim to the island and drag the boat with them. This was done as quickly as possible, for the water was bitterly cold.

The island was of spongy, floating bog, and it was with the greatest difficulty that a landing was made. Then the boat was dragged ashore and emptied, and the boys had a chance to look about, and they saw that the ground was well strewn with the many-coloured eggs. These they proceeded to collect, notwithstanding the noisy protestations of the gulls. Several dozen eggs were gathered and put close to the water's edge. Then Jack got in and Charlie handed him


the eggs, and then got in himself. With the greatest care they paddled ashore and landed after nearly capsizing several times. The boat was put in a sheltered place on shore and turned bottom up after which the boys, wet and rather cold, made their way as fast as possible back to camp. The wet buckskin clothes were most uncomfortable and slimy, and they were glad to exchange them for their winter suits.

"Now, let's have some real slapjacks with eggs in them," said Jack.

"Rather," Charlie replied as he got things ready, "and we'll have poached eggs; by Jove! but this will be a treat!"

Seldom had they enjoyed a meal so thoroughly. Charlie suggested that they get as many eggs as they could and store them in the ice-house. So the next few days were spent collecting a large supply, not only from the old pond but from several others which were found in the vicinity.

During all this time the boys had completely forgotten their beacon. Charlie remembered it one evening when they were talking of home, and the next day it was started again. Though thoroughly used to their simple life, the boys had a great longing to get home again. They even talked of trying to walk to the nearest settlement, wherever it might be, but the danger of getting



lost and the uncertainty of it all caused the plans to fall through each time.

As the weather became warmer, the regular pest of black flies and mosquitoes began, and it was decided to leave the camp at Beaver Stream and make a new one near the sea where the wind swept the flies away. The old lean-to had fallen down during the winter storms, so a new one was made larger and much better in every way, as the axe enabled them to do work that could not be accomplished with their simple knives. The time passed pleasantly enough between fishing and shooting fish, most of which were smoked, and taking trips inland. A few visits to the clam beds led to finding of only a few pearls, so after several days' searching they gave it up as useless.

One day early in July, while on a trip inland, they had the luck to find a wild goose's nest in which the eggs were about to hatch. They determined to secure the young ones as soon as they were old enough to take care of themselves, but the old geese thought otherwise. They knew that they were discovered, and so as soon as the young could travel, they took them away from the barren, and though the boys searched carefully they were never able to find them again.

Life during the months of summer was entirely devoid of hardships. It was indeed more like a

prolonged holiday during which very little hard work had to be done. On the chance of having to remain in the place for another winter, certain preparations were made. A lot of bark was peeled and stacked ready for use. The hut was put in thorough repair and a new woodshed built, but beyond that there was little to be done except enjoy the simple life. Toward the end of July the fineness of the weather was disturbed by several days of dense fog, followed by a severe storm. With such force did the wind blow that the boys could scarcely stand on the cliffs to watch the magnificent breakers as they crashed against the rock-bound coast. Fascinated by the sight, the boys stayed till after the sun had set behind the banks of dull purple clouds, and then they returned to the lean-to and after many attempts succeeded in cooking some salmon for dinner. A large screen sheltered the fire to some extent from the force of the wind, but the smoke curled round and nearly blinded the boys—so that cooking was accomplished under the greatest difficulties.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WRECK OF THE ENGLISH BARQUE "NORTHERN STAR"—THEY HELP TO SAVE THE CREW—THE RETURN TO CIVILIZATION—HOME AGAIN

DURING the night the storm increased in violence; thunder and lightning added to the terror of it. It was a fearful night for those on the sea. Sleep under the conditions was almost impossible. About midnight Jack started from his bed, for above the terrifying din of the elements came a sound as though a gun had been fired.

"Did you hear that?" he cried, but Charlie, scarcely waiting to reply, jumped up, slipped on his moccasins, and threw his old oilskin over him.

"Come along, there's someone in trouble," he shouted, as he hurried out of the lean-to, with Jack close at his heels.

In the inky blackness of the night the two fought their way, stumbling over the irregularities of the ground, blown this way and that at the mercy of the gale, and almost blinded by the driving rain. Holding on to each other, they slowly and painfully made their way to the coast, guided by the

smell of smoke which blew from the beacon on the point. At last they reached the low wall which protected the smoke fire, and there they crouched and watched without knowing what they expected to see. Occasionally a strange sound was borne down by the wind, a sharp crackling sound as though shots were being fired in rapid succession. The ceaseless din of the wind and waves drowned the sound most of the time, and the boys wondered what it could be.

In vain did their eyes try to pierce the wall of black that rose before them, when suddenly a brilliant flash of lightning illuminated the seething sea and revealed a large ship in a mass of foam. In the brief moment no details could be made out, nothing but that it was a sailing ship wrecked on the rocks about half a mile from shore. Immediately following the lightning came a deafening crash of thunder, which drowned the boys' voices as they tried to speak. As soon as it was passed a strange council of war was held. The two boys lay flat behind the wall and consulted.

"If they try to land at this point, they'll be dashed to pieces. What shall we do, Charlie?"

"Let us try to make a fire at the mouth of the river where there are no rocks. We can carry some fire from this beacon, and this birch bark that we have stored behind the wall will make a blaze."

“Come along and let’s try it,” Jack replied.

Then they tore up the smoke fire and wrapped up some burning embers in a piece of bark and ran with this to the river mouth. As soon as the bark was opened the wind caught the embers and instantly carried them away, so Jack ran back for some more, and this time the bark was lighted and its flickering yellow blaze gave a strange glare, which made the surrounding darkness seem even blacker than before. The bark burned quickly and more had to be procured. Then some large pieces were stuck into a split pole, and this torch the boys held high and waved back and forth in hopes of attracting attention. There had been several short flashes of lightning, but for a long time none of sufficient brilliancy to enable the boys to see more than the mere outline of the ship. At last a double flash lighted up the scene, and something which looked like a white boat was seen to be coming toward the river. More bark was added to the torch, and the boys waited anxiously for another glimpse of the boat.

The tension was frightful, each second seemed an hour, and the darkness more and more impenetrable; anything might be happening out there in the raging sea from which the spume was lifted by the wind and carried inland like giant snowflakes. If only they could see something the

feeling of impotence would not have been so appalling, but nothing lasts forever, and finally the noise of oars could be distinguished. At first this was uncertain, but gradually it became more and more clear, and at last in the glow of the flaming torch a boat was seen coming toward the shore, a boat deep laden, driven by wind and oars through the angry waves which, baulked of their prey, were trying to break into the boat and sink it within sight of a landing; but that was not to be, and the next moment she grounded close to where the boys were standing, and the men, eight in number, leaped into the water and dragged the water-filled boat to the beach.

Charlie and Jack helped to secure the battered craft, and then the men crowded round and wanted to know where they were and how it was the boys had thought of steering them to the landing. Questions were asked and answered in a breathless way, everyone talking at once, while the storm carried the voices away.

It appeared that the vessel was an English barque called the *Northern Star*, which during the dense fog had lost her bearings and been driven ashore after having lost both her main and mizzen masts. The crew of fifteen had left in two boats, so the question was what had become of the other seven, which included the captain. It

was quite possible that they had seen the sparks from the beacon fire when the boys had taken the embers, and had steered for the shore near the point.

Two of the men stayed at the landing with the torch to guide the boat should it attempt coming to the river, while the boys with the other men made a couple of new torches and proceeded to examine the coast. On reaching the farther side of the point three men were seen approaching. Gaunt figures they were, in dripping, wind-blown clothes which clung tightly to their limbs on one side. Hatless and with beards and hair flying in the air, they presented a weird spectacle as they came into the fitful glow of the torches. Of the three, one was the captain, Bower by name, a man of some fifty years of age, tall and sturdy; with him was the cook and a seaman.

It was almost impossible to carry on any conversation owing to the bellowing of the storm, but enough was said to show that their boat had been driven on to the rocks and smashed, and three of the men had been pretty badly bruised, so one of the uninjured had stayed with them while the captain and the other two had gone to look for help and had seen the torch.

The first thing the captain wished to do was to take the injured men to some shelter, so the boys

suggested the lean-to. The next thing was to find the men, for in coming toward the torch-light the three had travelled farther than they were aware, and it was some time before the sailors were discovered. Two of them could walk if helped, but the third had to be carried. On the way to camp, Jack ran back and brought the two that had been left with the boat. By this time day was beginning to dawn. A faint, cold gray light showed the land in a dim, intangible way, and the procession of men wending its way over the rough ground and carrying the wounded, and lighted by the flickering torch, seemed scarcely real.

As soon as camp was reached, a roaring fire was at once started and the shivering men crowded round it, while the boys got several salmon from the smoke-house and hung them on spits to roast. With the coming of daylight the force of the wind rapidly diminished, and the boys were able to see their new companions, who in turn were greatly interested to hear of the strange life led by their rescuers. It seemed to them almost like a fairy tale that the two young fellows could have lived and even flourished, for they looked the very picture of health, in such a wild, bleak country.

"I'll tell you what it is, my boys," the captain said, when they had given a brief outline of their story. "There'll be some happy people in Boston

when you turn up. Now the question is, where are we? Northwestern Newfoundland, I should judge, for I was trying to get through the Strait of Belle Isle when this wretched storm caught us. Well, I've lost the poor old ship, but fortunately she was insured. When I took out the policy to cover war risks, I did hate to pay out so much good money."

"You say war risks," Charlie and Jack interrupted almost together, "is there a war?"

"War, war?" the old captain repeated slowly. "What, didn't you know it! Why, good Lord! the whole blessed world is fighting. Millions and millions of fine men have been literally slaughtered, and all on account of that mad German Kaiser who thought he'd own every nation on earth; but you'll hear plenty of that subject when you get home, which brings me back to the question of how we shall manage it. There's the boat that landed in the river which is, I hope, quite sound. Now if we pick good weather, we can make our way down the coast until we strike a port, after which all will be easy. How about grub if we have to stay here a week or two?"

"Oh, that'll be right enough," Charlie replied. "We have enough meat to last us all several weeks, and then we can always get fish, but there is not a great deal of flour, so we shall have to go easy on

that. Anyhow, we won't starve, and we can fix up a large lean-to for all hands to sleep in, so we shall be quite comfortable. But tell me about the war. Who is winning? and is America in it?"

"Well, who is winning is a hard question to answer. At the very first, Germany had things her own way and it looked jolly black for us all, but we and the French turned her back when she was almost on top of Paris, and since then we have a little more than held her on the eastern side of France, and we still hold a small piece of Belgium. In the east, Russia has won and lost and is now holding her own, and there is every prospect of her giving the Germans and Austrians a good deal more than they want. Turkey has given us a bad time and we have failed to get through the Dardanelles, and have lost a lot of men and several ships there. Italy is fighting the Austrians and is going ahead slowly."*

"What about the Navy? Have there been any big engagements?" Jack asked.

"The British navy has done splendid work, but there have been no big engagements, as the Germans will not come out of Kiel and we have destroyed all their ships everywhere else. Submarines have been the most important trouble, for they have sunk a lot of our merchant vessels, in-

*This was the position of the war during the early summer of 1915.

cluding the *Lusitania*, which was full of passengers, and the brutes gave them no chance of escape; but they have been paying dearly for their crimes."

"Have aeroplanes and airships done as much as was expected?" asked Charlie.

"Yes, far more. The aeroplanes have been marvellous, and have done far more than was ever expected; but the much-talked-of Zeppelins, well, they have been little better than useless. Several times they have come over to England and killed a few harmless people and smashed an odd building here and there, but beyond that they have not justified their existence."

"I suppose England is in a frightfully excited condition, isn't it?"

"No, not at all. You would scarcely know that there was any war, except that at night no lights are allowed, and of course you see no end of soldiers, for our Army now numbers several millions."

"Just think of it! Nearly all the world at war and we calmly up here knowing nothing about it, Jack. What a lot there will be for us to hear about. It makes me more than ever anxious to get home. I say, Captain, how long do you suppose it will take us to reach some port?"

"My dear boy, how can I tell, as I don't know where we are? but I don't believe it can be more

than sixty or seventy miles, and we could do that in a couple of days if the weather is good. Let's go and have a look at the boat and see that she is safe, and then we can have a walk inland and see some of your country."

The captain with the boys and a couple of men went down the river and found that the boat was little the worse for the storm. They baled her out and hauled her well up on the beach. Then Charlie suggested that it would be well to go to the ice-house to get a supply of meat. So all the party except the three injured men started inland, passing by the camp at Beaver Stream, where the captain was greatly interested to see how well the boys had arranged things. He was also much surprised at the natural ice cave in which the meat was stored.

"You boys certainly ought to be congratulated on having done so well," the captain remarked. "You must have had a very good and sensible bringing-up, or you would never have been able to take advantage of the very slender resources of the country as you have done."

The boys told him how they had first come to Newfoundland and had been shown many things which had proved of the utmost value to them in their exile, and how they had been always taught to keep their eyes open and notice things.

Loaded with a good supply of meat, the party returned to the camp, arriving shortly before sunset. A rough lean-to was quickly made and a hearty meal prepared. During the following three days the weather continued unsettled, but on the fourth day the captain decided that there was a prospect of a few fine days, so they made their preparations to start early the next morning. The boat was well supplied with provisions, and the boys took all their trophies and the skins and pearls they had collected and stowed them safely in the boat. With the first gleam of dawn all were up, and immediately after breakfast they launched the boat and the boys bade farewell to their home in the northern wilds with mixed feelings of regret and pleasure, for they had really enjoyed their year of solitude; but the prospect of seeing their home and family filled them with a happy excitement that can be readily understood.

Each stroke of the oars took them farther from the camp, and gradually the mouth of the river faded away in the distance as they made their way along the coast. Fine weather favoured them, and the boat moved through the smooth water at the rate of fully three miles an hour. Late in the afternoon a landing was made in a small cove into which flowed a narrow stream. A rough shelter camp was soon made, and a simple meal prepared,

after which enough sea trout were caught to furnish the next morning's breakfast.

During the night a stiff southwesterly wind rose, so that no attempt could be made to leave; but by the following morning the wind had shifted round to the northeast and they were able to proceed on their journey with a fair wind under the lee of the land. Shortly after midday a vessel was sighted. She proved to be a small fishing schooner. They rowed alongside and were told that the entrance to the Bay of Islands was about thirty-five miles to the south. The men on the schooner were of course much interested to hear of the party's experience, and insisted on giving them some hot tea and hard tack, as well as some fresh cod. The boys thought it would be a good idea to get the vessel to take them to Bay of Islands and suggested it to Captain Bower. There was the matter of payment. King was the chief owner of the schooner and they put the question to him, saying that the money would be sent immediately they arrived home. He, in turn, asked the other members of the crew, and all agreed to Jack's proposal, which was that they should take them to Bay of Islands' entrance and that there should be no question of any definite sum of money, but that if, when they reached home, they felt like sending a small present, it would be most acceptable,

as they were all poor men. This was most satisfactory. The boat was taken in tow, and the schooner's head turned south, and they were soon bounding along at a good speed.

The crew of the schooner were sitting on deck listening to the boys' account of their life, when Charlie spoke of the old trapper.

"I'll bet that's poor old Uncle Jim," said one of the men named Jack Pennell. "He went up north somewhere for silver foxes and was never heard of again. His brother, who was with him, was found smashed up in an ice jam. Did you say that you found a lot of silver fox skins in the hut?"

"Yes," Charlie replied, "and I have them here. Perhaps you will be able to help me by taking them to those who ought to have them. Had either of your uncles any family?"

"Yes, sir. Their wives is both alive now, and their boys is taking care of them, and I tell you, sir, if them skins is worth a few hundred dollars it will be a godsend, for they're awful hard up. The war has made things very bad for them what trusts to what they makes from the sports in the fishin' and huntin' season, for there ain't been any sportin' parties here this year."

"Where do these cousins of yours live?" Charlie asked.

"Just across the water from Bay of Islands. Would you let me see the skins?"

"Certainly, and perhaps you can give us some idea of what they are worth."

The bundle of skins was brought up from the boat, and those which had been found in the hut were opened. The men crowded round to see them, and Jack Pennell carefully examined the silvers. Picking out an extra good one, he said it should be worth pretty nearly one thousand dollars, and the others from one hundred to about six or seven hundred.

"It's a fortune," he remarked, in his quiet Newfoundland way, "and you two will be blessed for ever and ever for what you have done. I say, Captain," he said, addressing King, "we must take them all the way to Bay of Islands. It won't do to risk this fortune in no small boat. You won't mind, will you? You'll get well paid for it by my cousins, for they'll have so much they won't know what to do with it. You'll do it, won't you?"

"Of course I will," he replied. "I made up my mind to that the moment I set eyes on them skins."

The journey to Bay of Islands was accomplished without incident, and the following morning anchor was dropped near the town. As soon as the sails had been stowed all hands made for

shore. With astonishing rapidity the news of the arrival of the shipwrecked crew and the two boys spread throughout the small town. Captain Bower made formal report of the loss of his vessel, and the boys went to the local store to try to arrange for the money necessary to take them home. By depositing one of the silver fox skins as security, they obtained enough money for the fare and for some respectable clothes. As it was several hours before the train to Port-aux-basques was due, they went across the bay with Pennell, taking the fox skins with them. The surprise of the old people was very great. They could scarcely believe what the boys told them, and when the valuable skins were handed to them they completely broke down. It seemed, as they said, a fine present from the dead, a present which meant that they could end their days in peace and plenty, for the sale of the skins would be carefully managed by the sons, who were well versed in such things and knew the tricks of the fur trader.

With the blessings of everyone in the vicinity—for good fortune, like sorrow, is shared by all members of these small primitive communities—the boys took their departure, and soon reached the station where they had to await their train. In due course it arrived, and they bade farewell to Captain Bower and his men and to the crew of the

schooner, and waved hands to half the town who had come to see them off. How strange it was to be on a train again, and to sit down to a properly cooked meal. They ordered nearly everything on the bill of fare, for, as they said, they had much time to make up. They decided that it would be best to wire home the following evening, so that the family would have only one night to wait after knowing of their coming.

What a surprise that wire would be! It was even a question whether it would not be more fun simply to walk in unannounced, but that might give Mrs. Sylvester a shock, so the wire was decided on and sent from St. John the night before they were due to arrive in Boston.

The following morning, after leaving Portland, they were reading the Boston paper when the following article caught Jack's eye:

THE DEAD COME TO LIFE

Strange Adventures of Two Boys in Newfoundland

News has just reached us from Newfoundland of the extraordinary adventures of Charlie Mason and Jack Sylvester, who, it will be remembered, were believed to have been lost last year while after tuna. It appears that they were washed ashore in an uninhabited region of Newfoundland, and though without arms or provisions have managed to keep themselves alive for a year, thanks to their knowledge of woodcraft. As they are now on their way to their home in Boston, we hope to be able to give our readers a full account of their adventures at an early date.

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"Well, what do you think of that, Charlie?"

"I'll be hanged! how on earth do you suppose that got there. Some chap from Bay of Islands must have sent it. I wonder if your father and mother have seen it?" Charlie replied.

Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester and Evelyn, with Mr. Pratt, were standing in the Boston station waiting anxiously for the arrival of the St. John express. Already the train was ten minutes late. In her excitement, Mrs. Sylvester could scarcely keep back her tears, and she clutched her husband's arm nervously as she asked for the hundredth time if he thought there had been any accident. It seemed as though the time would never pass, when suddenly a porter who knew them by sight said that the train was signalled and would be in immediately.

"Which platform?"

"No. 7, ma'am."

They rushed through the gate just as the train came in sight. In breathless silence each carriage was scrutinized.

"There they are!" cried Evelyn, and without waiting she bounded forward toward the two browned boys who were coming out of the Pullman sleeper. The other passengers must have wondered at the warmth of the meeting. Mrs. Sylvester could scarcely speak, so much did she

tremble, while even the men found it hard to control themselves.

"Where's your luggage, Jack?" asked Mr. Pratt, laughing, as he saw the bundle of furs, snowshoes, and bows.

Quickly the whole party got into a car and were home in a few minutes. Breakfast was ready, but no one cared to eat. They were far too excited and they all talked at once. After the attempt at the meal, the skins were spread out and the pearls were displayed, to the particular delight of Evelyn who could scarcely believe her eyes, as she handled each one in turn. The whole morning was spent in reciting the adventures from the moment the launch had broken down.

"Do tell us about the tuna, Dad, and just what happened. We were so busy with the launch that we saw scarcely anything except that you were being towed at a wonderful speed," said Jack, appealing to his father.

"Well boys, you saw the beginning of the fun and how that fish took hold with remarkable vigour, and how in a very short time I had all I could do to hang on to the rod, which was nearly pulled out of my hands. My mind was so entirely devoted to the fish, and I was so excited that I don't believe it ever occurred to me to give a thought to you two in the launch. The strength

of that monster was really wonderful, and I could do nothing to check him in his mad rush. It was not long before my arms began to ache so that I could scarcely stand the strain. During the first frantic rush most of the line had been taken out, but it was fully an hour before there was the slightest chance of recovering any of it, and then it was only by the hardest sort of work that I managed to reel in a few feet at a time when the fish condescended occasionally to ease up on his speed. While the weather remained calm I believed that I was having about all I could manage, but you remember how the wind sprang up after a couple of hours or so, and the sea became choppy in a very short time, well, you have no idea what that did to me. The jerking of the boat as the waves struck it nearly tore the rod from my hands, and it was practically impossible to reel in any line, as my whole energy was devoted to keeping control of the rod; my back ached to a painful degree, and my hands became numbed, but still the beastly fish went on as though bound for the other end of the world. The stronger the wind blew and the rougher grew the sea, the harder did that brute pull. At times he would circle around in a most annoying way, then again he would sound and like a lump of lead sink with incredible speed; this was most disconcerting,

as I simply had to let the line go out, then as he rose I had to work with frantic speed to regain what little I could of it. Altogether it was exciting to a terrifying degree. After several hours of this sort of thing, with the weather growing steadily worse all the time, I looked round to see what had become of you, but there was absolutely no sign of you and the launch, then I searched the horizon for the yacht and finally made her out so far away that she looked like a mere speck. I can assure you I cursed that fish and still more my own folly in not having paid attention to the advice of the captain when he warned us about the weather before we started out that morning. You have no idea what I went through that fateful day. It was quite evident that a severe storm had begun, and knowing the reputation which the Newfoundland region has for bad weather I realized most painfully that the situation was very serious. Of course had I been sensible I should have cut loose from the fish and returned to the yacht and then gone in search of you, but, I am ashamed to say, I was so intensely interested in trying to land that tuna that, for some time at least, I did not fully appreciate the danger you were in. In some way I imagined you had gone back to the yacht, and that I should soon be able to join you and we would all celebrate

the great victory. Tom Anderson, who you may remember was a very quiet sort of chap, was greatly interested in the fish, but he said not a word until I asked his advice. He seemed most anxious to see the fish safely landed, but he did say that he thought with the bad weather coming we ought to get back to the yacht as soon as possible. I regret to say I disregarded his sound advice. As a matter of fact, I was almost incapable of thinking, my mind was on that fish while I was going through the greatest physical strain I have ever endured. With the ever-increasing roughness of the sea there was always the chance of being swamped in our cockleshell of a boat. Tom was almost as busy with the steering and bailing as I was with the rod, and I must say the way in which he handled that boat was marvellous. For hours we continued the fight; sometimes the tuna came near the surface, and when he did so he left a trail such as a torpedo would make, but most of the time he kept well below the surface and went at a fairly even speed of about three or four miles an hour. In the meantime the yacht had evidently sighted us; unfortunately the wind was against her and she had to beat directly to windward so that her approach was very slow, sometimes, indeed, it seemed as though we were getting farther away from her. It must have

been about three o'clock before the fish began to show any signs of weariness. At intervals he would slow down to a speed of less than a mile an hour, and several times he turned and came toward us, when this happened I had to reel in line for all I was worth. Each time he did this I fondly believed the end was near and wondered how we were to do the killing, when the powerful creature would dash off with renewed vigour in a most discouraging way. Owing to the noisy howling of the wind and the slapping of the waves against the sides of the boat conversation was almost impossible, the words would literally be blown away as they left one's mouth, so I was forced to give up any attempt at discussing what we should do. In my own mind I thought it would be quite impossible to use the gaff, owing to the roughness of the water, and I determined to play the fish till it was about dead and then put a bullet in his head to make sure before securing him with harpoon. While I was working out this plan the tuna made a sudden rush toward the boat and was passing about twenty yards to one side when I heard a shot fired; the sound was followed immediately by a terrific turmoil as though there had been an explosion in the water, then came a frantic tug at the rod and then the strain ceased with painful suddenness and the line drifted limply

down wind. That was the end of the tuna and I did not know whether to be sorry or glad. I simply collapsed, while Tom quickly got control of the boat which had broached beam-on to the sea and would have been swamped but for his instant action in swinging the boat stern on to the angry waves."

"What had happened?" called out Jack and Charlie almost in one breath.

"Simply this: Tom, thinking that we might not get a better opportunity, had fired at the fish in the hopes of killing it, but evidently the shot had not been well placed, at least it had not proved immediately fatal, and it was the death struggles of the mighty beast that had smashed the line."

"How big was the fish, do you suppose?" Jack asked.

"I don't know, but Tom declared he must have weighed pretty close to a thousand pounds."

"Well, Dad, I think he must have weighed fully that, at least that was what Charlie and I guessed."

"What do you mean?" Mr. Sylvester asked with a surprised look in his eyes. "How in the world could you tell when you were never near enough to even see the beast?"

"Oh, we know lots of things that would surprise

you," Charlie laughingly replied as he whispered something in Jack's ear.

Jack quickly left the room and returned a moment later carrying a piece of tuna skin which he handed to his father, with the remark: "There's a bit of your tuna's skin, Dad."

Mr. Sylvester looked thoroughly bewildered and could scarcely believe the story which the boys told of how the tuna had been washed ashore almost at their very feet.

"Well, I'll be hanged! Such a coincidence seems incredible, but after all the same wind and sea that caused you to drift to that part of the coast also took the tuna, so I suppose it is not so *very* wonderful after all."

"What happened to you after you broke loose?" Charlie asked.

"We drifted with the wind straight down to the yacht and after considerable difficulty managed to get on board while she lay-to and then until dark we cruised about in search of the launch, but finally the captain declared it unsafe to remain out in the open sea, as the storm was steadily increasing in violence. So we ran down till we were under the lee of the Quebec coast, and remained there until the storm abated, when with small hope of success we once more cruised about in search of the launch. It was the longest and

bitterest week of my life. At the end of it we returned to North Sidney."

"What I went through you have no idea, boys," said Mr. Sylvester. "What was I to tell your mother? There seemed so little chance that you could have escaped. Yet I dared not say that there was no hope. I simply dreaded getting home."

"And you can imagine what I thought when I saw him coming in all alone," said Mrs. Sylvester. "Of course, I knew that something dreadful had happened, but when he said that you were both lost, I thought I should die. However, here you are, thank God."

"You see, Mother," Charlie added, "we were not lost, only mislaid."

THE END

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